



LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

No. XXVI]

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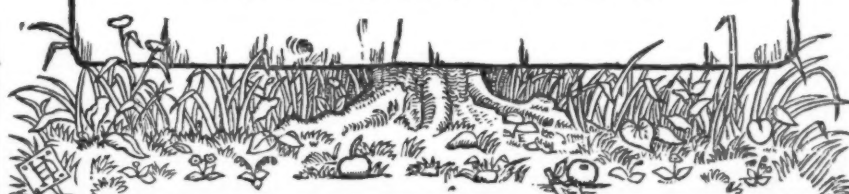
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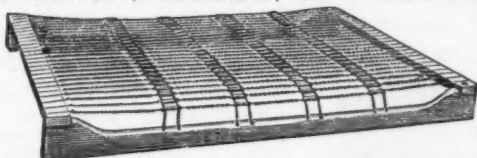
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DECEMBER 1884.

Jack's Courtship:

A SAILOR'S YARN OF LOVE AND SHIPWRECK.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.

CHAPTER XL.

WE LEAVE THE ISLAND.

I FOUND the cook standing in the cabin door, and called him in to help me to arrange for the accommodation of Aunt Damaris and Florence. The largest of the three cabins was the captain's, next the mate's; there were two bunks in this room, along with a fixed washstand, a little table that swung on hinges, and one or two other things of that kind which made the little compartment look habitable.

'Now, Mr. Seymour,' exclaimed Aunt Damaris, throwing down her cloak and looking and talking with a great air of hearty active bustle, 'I'm not going to allow you to be our chambermaid. You have the brig and the provisions and a thousand matters to attend to, and Florence and I are quite able to make this cabin comfortable for ourselves. Have you any clean blankets in this ship?' said she, addressing the cook with the old pecking gesture of her lean face.

'Naught but what you see, missis,' answered the cook, pointing to a blanket and rug in the upper bunk.

'Well, we cannot use them as they are, but I suppose they can be washed and dried by-and-by,' said the old lady, hauling them out and looking at them, and then dropping them on to the deck.

'I'll endeavour to wash them if the cook can find me a tub and some soap,' said Florence.

I laughed and said, 'Why, my darling, what do you think
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you could make of them with your little hands? No need for you to turn laundress yet, Florence. Besides, I suppose there's not much soap to be found going aboard the *Sarah Jane*, is there, cook?' 'I dunno as I could put my hand at once on a piece,' answered the cook, 'but there ought to be a bar or two knocking about somewheres.'

'Anyway, Miss Hawke,' said I, 'I'll leave you for the present whilst I take a look round. This cabin is not so comfortable as the *Strathmore's*, but it's better than the hut: ' and so saying I left them, keeping silence about the desperate condition of the mate next door, for *they* could do him no good, and I wanted nothing sorrowful to come down again with its gloom to darken the hope and gladness which were shining bright in my darling's beauty.

I stumped about the deck, examining the brig's equipment and her rigging and spars. I discovered that we should have to sail the vessel without a foretopgallantmast, for there were no spare booms, nothing that would answer for a mast and yard, to be seen. But this was no very serious matter.

Gazing in a dreamy manner, scarcely realising the ill-luck that had plunged us into this situation, the amazing good-fortune that had rescued us from it, I was aroused by feeling a hand slipped into mine. It was Florence.

'Oh, Jack,' she exclaimed, 'is it not wonderful to find ourselves *here*, when yesterday we believed we should never be released from that island?'

'So wonderful that it hardly seems true. Why, only think of the chances against a vessel calling here for any purpose! But the sea is too full of surprises to allow people who are accustomed to it ever to feel astonished at what happens on it. One night we spent in an open boat, one day and night on that rock: that consists of our shipwreck so far. Now our business is not to go on wondering, but to get home. And oh, my love, my darling, how happy shall I be when I feel that English soil is once again under your feet, and that there is no more fear of sea-disasters happening to make your sweet face white, and put such sorrow and hopelessness as I spied yesterday in your eyes.'

'It has been a terrible time—yet it has done one thing, Jack, I think.'

'What, my own?'

'It has brought us closer together,' said she, hanging her head and yet peeping at me.

'Ay, it has done that. But what is to be the end? When we get home, what will your father do? Will he come between us?'

'I don't think he will—I don't think he could,' she answered; and then said 'poor papa!' and sighed.

I folded my arms and leaned against the bulwarks, looking at her. 'I talk of getting home,' said I, 'but we have to reach Australia first.'

'Oh! are we going on to Australia?'

'Why, yes; because, you see, the winds in these seas blow west, and I don't want to sail a thousand miles north to get a fair wind for the Cape. When we reach Australia arrangements may be made for you to stop with your aunt a year or two, and what shall I do then? Must I stay too? If I am ever to call you my own, inseparably mine, Florence—my wife indeed—how long shall I have to wait for that time to arrive? Oh, my darling, do you know my outlook as regards *you* is like an outlook from that island yesterday; nothing but fine weather in sight; no land, no ship, no promise of escape.'

She was blushing as I talked thus. But girls have mighty good sense in such matters as these, and she quietly took a hitch with the end of my jawing-tackle by saying, 'Jack, let us reach Australia first, and then, dear, we will put our heads together,' which properly brought me up with a round turn: for after all there was no good jabbering about how we were to get married, and what her father would do, and what might happen when we reached Sydney or England, or whatever other country we might happen to fetch, till the island we were lying abreast of was as far astern as the coast we meant to aim for was then distant.

Besides, Aunt Damaris at that moment came out of the cabin to stop any further talk of that kind. You could see the high spirits she was in by her walk, that was half a dance as she approached us.

'Oh!' she cried in a rapturous way, clasping her hands, with many a pecking gesture of her head, 'what a wonderful deliverance! It is impossible to realise it in that house. Our cabin will do very well, Mr. Seymour. Florence will take the top berth, for I cannot climb. If one of the sailors will wash the rug and blanket—and I dare say there are more to be had and washed—we shall be quite comfortable. How long are we going to stop here?'

'I am only waiting for the men to come off with whatever they may catch or kill,' said I.

'And where shall we go then?' she asked.

'Why, to Australia,' I replied.

'Oh, pray don't go to Australia for *my* sake if there's any nearer land. The nearest place where we can find a comfortable ship will be the best place to sail to.'

I told her that Australia was as near as any other country, and I also explained why I chose it. 'But,' said I, 'I don't trouble to think of fetching Australia in this old waggon. We must endeavour to sight a vessel and transfer ourselves to her, let her destination be what it will.'

'Suppose,' said she, 'we don't sight a ship. Will you be able to navigate this brig to Australia?'

'Why, yes, certainly. If I were not a sailor I should no doubt be at a loss. You see, Miss Hawke, it's sometimes useful to have been at sea as a sailor.'

'And to be in the company of a sailor when one is shipwrecked,' said Florence.

'Oh, Mr. Jack,' cried Aunt Damaris effusively, grasping my hand, 'you are a dear good fellow. What do we not owe you?'

'*This*,' I replied, lifting Florence's hand.

'You have it,' answered the old lady promptly. 'Have I not told you so again and again? It is *my* affair now,' she added, with a toss of the head for which I could have kissed her: 'and my brother will see the thing in its proper light when I explain.'

My darling's sweet eyes peered up into mine as if she would say, 'There, Jack, what more can you possibly want?'

Just then comes William Somers, rolling out of the galley with a couple of hook-pots of coffee in his hands. We followed him into the cabin, and by dint of rummaging he procured some cups and saucers, ship's biscuit, moist sugar, and a lump of cold salt junk. There was no milk, but for all that Florence and her aunt were glad of the hot coffee; and they even attacked the beef and the sea-bread, finding their appetite now that the first deep excitement the news and sight of the brig had raised in them was gone, and perhaps guessing there might be some relish in the salt meat after the fat and insipid tinned stuff we had been living upon. It did my heart good to see them eating and talking in that little cabin with something of the old life in their manner that they had aboard the *Strathmore*. Whilst we were thus occupied the cook came up out of the lazarette, rather scaring Florence by his slow ghostly way of rising through the bit of a hatch. He was covered with perspiration and grimy as a sweep with creeping and crawling. But the job was worth the trouble, for from the report he made to me, and the figures he had set down on a piece of paper by the aid of his lamp, I could now tell exactly the length of time the provisions would hold out by putting ourselves on a limited allowance. I found that we could make them last a good six weeks without very great stint. This was beyond my expectations and rendered me easy in my mind: for I had a good right to consider that even if we failed to encounter between this and Australia any vessel worth quitting the brig for, we were likely to meet with one that would be willing to help us to the extent of a gift of beef or flour or bread.

There was nothing now to be done till the men came aboard; and I hoped the bo'sun, if he found the old fowling-piece of no use among the goats, would not linger, for I was impatient and wanted to be off. The westerly wind had gathered weight and was now blowing a very pretty little breeze. The sea sparkled like a surface of diamonds to it, and the blue shone up through the innumerable flashings, and made a most lovely space of water. I could not see the men ashore nor hear the sound of shots, but there was nothing surprising in this, for the north horn of rock shut out a large piece of the island in the north-west, and for the same

cause the sound of the gun, if the crazy old piece made any noise at all, would be killed long before it could reach us. I got chairs out of the cabin and made my darling and the old lady comfortable on deck; and hung about them all the morning till the sun was past the north and the afternoon had begun.

Talk! why I cannot remember that my tongue ever wagged more incessantly. One thing leading on to another, we drifted into the subject of my love, and I gave Aunt Damaris the whole story of it, as if this were the first time the matter had been mentioned between us. I wouldn't let her off a single point. I began the yarn by telling her all about myself, who my father was and who my mother was, the exact extent of my income, how my uncle had found me out, and so worked my way clear along till I came to my joining the *Strathmore*: and then I bestowed a few blunt truths upon her. I told her that I had chosen the name of Egerton, 'because,' said I, 'it has an aristocratic sound, and I hoped it might prejudice you in my favour and enable me to be much with Florence, without——'

'Without what, Mr. Seymour?' said she, with her old face looking wonderfully sharp against the blue sky beyond her.

'Well, without exciting your hostility. I thought to myself, "If she likes Mr. Morecombe simply because he is well-connected, she will like me too if I can only make her believe I am of good birth and aristocratically associated." But I didn't succeed,' said I, smiling at her: 'if you liked me, it was for myself.'

As I said this I turned to look over the rail towards the island, and the first thing I saw was the gig pulling out through the breakwater. 'Here they are,' I shouted, 'goats or no goats. Hurrah for home!'

The boat was deep, much deeper than the weight of the seven men should have sunk her. The oars flashed in the sunshine as they rose and fell, and I sprang on to the bulwarks to hail the bo'sun. 'Bear a hand, men!' I bawled. 'Let's get under way. We're sick of waiting. What have you got?'

'Four dead goats and about half a ton of crabs and shellfish,' he shouted.

The gig drove alongside, and it was indeed a sight to look into her. Crawling and wriggling about her bottom were some hundreds of crabs, many of them of great size, together with masses of shellfish of various descriptions, such as crayfish, whelks or what might have passed for them, limpets, and cockles. Upon them lay four dead goats, meagre-looking animals to be sure, with long beards and long horns. The men came clambering over the brig's side, leaving two hands in the gig; then the goats were hauled up, all the tubs which could be mustered brought along, and buckets passed over, which were filled with crabs and shellfish, drawn up and emptied into the tubs.

I pulled out my watch. 'It's now a quarter to two,' said I.

‘Send the men to dinner, will you, Shilling? They’d better dine off the old stores to save time; and tell them not to be long over it. I want to fetch Amsterdam Island before dark if possible, to see if there be any of the *Strathmore’s* people there.’

The gig was now emptied, the two fellows tumbled up out of her, she was then hoisted aboard, and all hands went to dinner.

CHAPTER XLI.

STRUGGLING EASTWARDS.

THREE hours after we had quitted St. Paul’s, Amsterdam Island was in sight about a point on the lee bow, a looming bit of blue, with the running waters trembling between it and us. Fourteen or fifteen miles astern was the island we had left, like a bit of amber in the western sunshine. We had another three hours of daylight before us, and glad was I to feel the wind freshening yet and the bluff bows forward bursting with a roaring noise through the water, for long before the darkness fell, the breeze would have brought us well within the scope of any eyes that might be upon the land there, and it was not likely to draw up so black but that a boat could see and fetch us if we hove-to and waited a bit. All this while, the hands had been full of business, making ready the deck-house for themselves, skinning and cutting up the goats into joints, boiling the crabs and shell-fish in capfuls to make room in the tubs for those which were left uncooked, cleaning up the decks, washing blankets (which had been come at by the cook) for cabin use. The bo’sun kept aft with me much of the time, and there was a hand in the foretop with the brig’s telescope, working away with it at the growing and brightening island, ready to report a signal or a boat if ever such a thing should heave into the view of his lenses.

Heading as we were, first the southern, then the western and then the northern portions of the island would be opened and compassed by us; and I might be as sure as fate that if there were people there they would spy us coming. The flying light threw the land up clear and keen in the field of the telescope—that was a very good glass, though its coat was deplorably ragged and old—and I’d see the green of plenty of vegetation there and an island very much more cheerful and habitable to behold than the hollow sterile crater-rock on which we had passed the night. But look as I would there was no appearance of a signal of any kind to be seen on the south and east sides of it. I swept the rugged line and foreground of the water with extraordinary care, but nothing resembling a boat was to be discerned, though I reckoned that if any of the *Strathmore’s* people had found an asylum there they’d make haste to put off and intercept us when they saw the brig heading dead for the island. I went into the

cabin to overhaul the charts, and coming across one of the Indian Ocean with the prickings of half a dozen voyages upon it, I examined it to make sure of my navigation, for I had no desire to plump the *Sarah Jane* on a sunken reef hereabouts: and finding the coast clear returned on deck and stood conversing with the bo'sun while the sun sank lower and lower and the island on the lee bow grew bigger and greener with the flush of the setting daylight upon it and a coming and going of its emerald hues as the cloud shadows swept over it. Yet the sun was still above the water when the land was little more than three miles distant, plain in the glass as a man's hand to his eyes, and the surf ringing it with the gleam of ivory.

'I'm afraid we shall find nobody there, bo'sun,' said I.

'I'm afraid so too, sir,' he replied, letting the glass fall from his face. 'There's plenty of stuff to make a smoke with, anyhow: there's plenty of clear top for a signal too, and we're close enough to see a pocket-hankerchief if such a thing was hoisted. If none of our people are there, where *are* they, sir?'

'Picked up, or drowned, or still knocking about—one of the three certainly: for we know they are not on St. Paul's, and I'm afraid they are not yonder.'

Aunt Damaris and Florence joined us to look: and forward you could see all the men hanging over the rail staring at the land. Fathom by fathom we drove along, the old brig splashing savagely as she dived, and trembling under the pressure that was urging her; her bowsprit pointed to give the island a clear berth, and the sun whose lower limb was close to the water was nearly abeam; fixedly I watched the land as it slowly drew aft past the starboard cathead on to abaft the fore rigging, and so sternwards until the red glory creeping up and up the green slopes till the topmost heights looked like burning gold, suddenly melted upon the blue of the sky and burned in the clouds beyond; and when I withdrew my eye from the glass the sun was gone and the greenish seas were rolling up to us out of an horizon that was like a whirlpool of crimson haze.

'Wheel there!' I sung out, 'let her go off. Bo'sun, get the yards braced in for rounding in to the eastwards.'

This was done, and the wind by being brought aft gave us a more comfortable deck. Curtseying and rolling as only an old waggon in ballast knows how, the *Sarah Jane* swept along a north-east course, sending the island veering away on the starboard quarter, and opening the northern and eastern sides of the land that was fast taking an olive-coloured loom in the deepening twilight.

'Stand by to heave-to,' said I to the bo'sun. 'We must give our hopes a chance. But I very much fear it'll be idle waiting.'

There was still a little twilight left when, with her main top-gallantsail stowed, and the mainsail and foresail hauled up, the brig's helm was put down and she was hove-to with her head to

the northwards. There was a flare-tin aboard, and from time to time we burnt this over the rail, the turpentine making a great glare that illuminated the brig from the eyes to the taffrail; and the light was so strong that every time it burnt itself out it left our sight useless for a spell, and the night seemed as black as thunder till the white foam showed again, and we saw the island like a lump of indigo down to leeward. But no response was made; no light was shown and no boat appeared, though the merest phantom of one must have been spied, had it been there, by the eager eyes which hung over the bulwarks, gazing and searching and probing the swarming waters, with a sight intensified by eagerness to succour those who had been our shipmates.

'There's no chance, sir,' said the bo'sun to me, after we had been hove-to two hours, during which the brig had drifted away to the eastward till the dark lump of land hung fair on the weather quarter. 'If there's e'er a soul on that island, our flare must ha' been visible to 'em; they'd know the meaning, and if they had a boat they'd launch it; failing that, they'd kindle a fire to let us know they were there. Mr. Seymour, you'll find that rock as desolate as St. Paul's.'

'That's what I think. But what do the men say? If they choose, we'll 'bout ship and stand off and on till daylight.'

The watch off duty had gone below, which was a pretty good hint that they had abandoned all idea of there being anybody to save off that island. Shilling called to the men who were on deck and put the case to them. 'Should Mr. Seymour stand off and on during the night, and wait for the morning before sailing away?' They answered 'that they were quite willing, but they were afraid it would be of no use.' 'If,' said one of them, 'the people fetched that island on the same day as we fetched St. Paul's, they'd have their boats, for the weather was too fine to do 'em hurt. If they had their boats and was *there*, they'd have ratched off for us whenever they see the brig hauling into view. No boat appearin' and no sign havin' been made of there being life aboard Hamsterdam Island, my notion is, sir, that we'd do no good by stoppin'.'

All agreeing in this view, I bade them once again look over the side and have a good stare round; and then, having lingered another half-hour, I ordered the helm to be shifted and the yards braced square for an easterly course. It gave one a kind of wrench to go away, though it afterwards turned out to be the right thing to do. I stood peering into the dimness astern, till the bit of land that had gloomed out black and magnified even at the distance of three miles faded into the general darkness, and where it had been you saw nothing but a star or two low down, with the white water of our wake rushing out that way. The strong wind blew fair over the stern, and every inch of canvas the brig carried that would draw to a following breeze was set, and the old tub wallowed and splashed along her dark course. This time last night! thought I;

and I looked aloft at the darksome spaces of canvas as shadowy as clouds over the deck-houses, and then away into the south-west blackness, where the island of St. Paul's stood, and where the night lay darkest, and where the eye found no other light than the pallid glimmer of froth creaming with a long simmering sound out of the inky running coils of water, and pictured the hut there, and the women under the boat's sail, and myself crouched in the corner near the door. To think of *that*, to feel that week after week of such nights as this might have rolled over our heads without bringing us succour, was something, let me tell you, to force a wild shudder out of a man; and it was to get away from my own thoughts, more than for any other reason, that I walked into the deck-house where the old lady and my pet were, and sat down to yarn with them awhile by the light of the old hanging lamp that swung by a stanchion amidships of the structure.

CHAPTER XLII.

RESCUED.

ALL that night the strong westerly wind chased the *Sarah Jane* with a middling run of sea that helped the old bucket along bravely, and the log sometimes gave as much as six and a half knots. I was up, off and on, throughout the night, sometimes in the bo'sun's watch, sometimes in William Somers's, and always found both men alive and keeping a bright look-out, stumping one side of the deck, with a chap grinding at the wheel to meet the wild play of the frisky old waggon, the braces taut as the backstays, the wind shrilling off the swollen convexities, and the thunder of parted seas under the bows, coming aft against the wind with a noise like the falling of a cataract where water smites water and roars into foam.

But when I came on deck next morning I found the wind east-south-east, bleak as November in the Channel, a thick horizon, smoke-coloured clouds rolling up with a spitting of rain that was swept past the mast horizontally, and the brig leaning down to her covering-board on the starboard tack, close-hauled with single reefs in her topsails, and her foresail looking as if but a little more weight of wind was needed to make eyes in it. Oh, it was a dismal sight for a man to come on deck to look at, and it made lies of the charts that set down the prevailing winds as westerly. You need only have glanced over the weather-quarter and seen the short oily wake of the brig floating out to windward to understand my feelings. Sailing! why, it was all leeway: and the road we had traversed last night we were harking back upon, driving backwards beam-first, without an atom of help for it. I didn't mind this so much at the start, and indeed put a good face upon it before Aunt Damaris and Florence, telling them that

though to be sure we were not lying well up for Australia, our bows were more that way than our stern, and that there was no use in hoping for fair winds every day; but I got restless and anxious when next morning came and found the wind still blowing strong out of the east, the sky dirty, the horizon thick as mud, and the seas of a stormy green, as they slanted their curling ridges at the diving bows of the brig and tumbled over her weather-rail before the drifting hull could wallow out of the trough.

After breakfast that morning I went into the mate's cabin to have a talk with him, but found him too ill for conversation. So instead of doing what I intended—taking his judgment as to whether it would be wise to make a fair wind of it by heading north and seeking a fair breeze in parallels nearer the equator for a run to the Cape of Good Hope instead of trying for Australia—I attempted nothing more than a little sympathy, feeling all the while even the uselessness of *that*, for if ever a man lay dying, he did; you saw the shadow of what was coming on his hollow face, and his eyes had a dim yearning look as though for some time they had been striving to stare past the present, peering for a glimpse of a new kind of light whose dawn had not yet come. He had tasted no food, and I asked him if there was anything aboard the brig he could fancy—if there was anything indeed that could be done for him. He answered, no: he had no appetite; if there were a doctor or medicine he felt he might be brought back to life, he'd get some ease he was sure, and he only needed to be free of pain, he thought, to get better. But as it was, he told me he had no hope; and the tears came into the eyes of the lonely, dying sailor as he said it.

The ladies knew that the mate was a sick man, but how bad he was I had not told them, nor could they imagine, for they had never set eyes upon him, nor did they once tell me that they had heard him groaning or complaining in his cabin. When I left him this time, I found Florence and Aunt Damaris at the table looking over a book or two they had come across in the captain's berth.

'I wish this weather would clear up,' said the old lady. 'The air's too raw and damp for the deck, and yet it's quite intolerable to be confined to this house and tumbled about in it as if one were in a barrel rolling downhill.'

'It'll make home the sweeter when we get there,' I replied.

'I shall be glad to sight a ship,' she continued. 'It will not matter which way she steers. Nothing that we can encounter is likely to be more slow in her speed and violent in her movements than this brig.'

'How is the poor mate?' asked Florence, with a glance to let me know she was sorry that her aunt was in a bothersome mood. The darling could see I was worried myself, and asked the question to take the old lady off me.

'If he lives through the night,' I answered, 'it's as much as I dare hope for him.'

They both started. 'Is he dying? is he so near death as that?' exclaimed Florence in a low voice full of awe and pity.

'Poor, poor fellow!' cried Aunt Damaris.

'And he's lying alone there,' said Florence, 'without anybody to attend to him! Oh, Jack, you must let me go to him. It must be dreadful to die with people talking near you and yet nobody coming to say a prayer, to utter a word, to show that you are thought of.'

I told her to go by all means, saying that her presence would be sure to comfort the poor fellow, who might talk to her and speak to her of his home with more freedom than he would venture upon with one of his own sex; and I then stepped out on deck, being indeed too much troubled about the weather and the thoughts it put into my head, to dwell upon the mate, though in easier times the dying man would not, I think, have lacked plenty of sympathy and constant attention at my hands.

Shilling had charge of the watch, and I found him near the wheel, staring aloft at the topsails dark with the damp, with a look now and then at the weather horizon that was near to us with the thickness, whilst the brig laboured distressingly amidst the hollows which came yawning out of the smother, green as bottle-glass and laced with froth that the wind now and again would chip up and blow over the rail.

'This is the second day of this beastly easterly wind,' said I to him. 'I wouldn't call it serious now if I could reckon upon a fair wind to-morrow or even the next day, to hold for a month or two, or to drive us into the arms of a ship. But it has an abominably settled look.'

'Yes, it do look settled certainly,' he replied, slewing his moist face round the sea. 'Whoever says westerly breezes prevail in these waters hasn't got much of the truth in him.'

'I'd laugh at such weather,' I continued, 'if this brig could sail. But what's to be done with an old cask like this, that, even with the weather braces checked, drifts to leeward like the smoke from her galley chimney, and almost as fast!'

'There's no use talking of ratching with her, that's plain,' replied the bo'sun.

'We have barely provisions for six weeks,' said I. 'The ladies have no clothes but what they stand up in, and we *Strathmore's* men are pretty nearly as badly off. My fancy is to shift the helm and stretch away north and risk it; but think of the wind, after we had made a few hundred miles of westering, coming on to blow again from the westwards! It's a fearful job to be in a vessel that won't go to windward. If we don't mind our eye, bo'sun, we may be knocking about in the *Sarah Jane* four months hence, and making a worse shipwreck of it than had we stuck to St. Paul's.'

He tried to encourage me by saying there was no fear of that;

we were bound to meet a ship; if not we were sure to drive along somehow and reach civilised land. But I was in low spirits and unable to take a hopeful view. Why, even my former assured belief that we should sight a ship long before our provisions ran out and be succoured by her, became but a dim faint thing when I looked into the thickness, and reflected upon the huge surface of water we were upon, how little of it even in clear weather we were able to see, and how ships passing us at a distance of six or seven leagues only would be of no more account to us than were the great Indian Ocean unnavigated by any other fabric than ours.

I remained on deck all the morning, trusting that the weather might clear and enable me to get a view of the sun; and praying for a shift of wind and a visible horizon, with a mind worried by thinking whether we ought to hold on as we were, or to up helm and bear away north-west. At half-past twelve I went into the cabin for a bit of dinner, and there found Florence and her aunt fresh from the dying man, both of them looking terribly dejected.

'We have been praying with him, and reading from a Bible he has,' said Florence. 'He is so very grateful. Oh, Jack, he is dying fast. He fainted twice after telling us eagerly about his mother, and how, when he is gone, she will have no one to support her. He knows he is dying, and oh,' she cried, with her colourless face full of a kind of horror, 'it's dreadful to notice how he recoils from the idea of being thrown into the sea.'

'He'll not know—he'll not know it, Florence, when it happens,' exclaimed the old lady.

'Anyway,' I said, 'the ocean's a sweeter and purer cemetery than an acre of ground full of worms, and a hammock is a better coffin than an oak box. But for God's sake don't let us talk of death and horrors.' And I started off at a rattle upon whatever cheerful thing came into my head, sitting down beside Florence and fondling and soothing her, till I had brought something like colour in her face again.

He died that night. It was as black as pitch on deck, the seas breaking over the brig and the wind thick with salt water and squalls of rain: and I went into the deckhouse to take the shelter of it for a spell, and when there, thought I'd step into the mate's berth and see how he did. I knocked, but Aunt Damaris said, 'He'll be too feeble to answer you: he could scarcely speak to Florence when she was with him about two hours ago.' So I opened the door and went in, and spied him by the light of the cabin lamp lying along the deck with his face down and his arms stretched out. I fancied he was in a faint, that he had wanted help and got out of his bunk and fallen down for weakness and swooned, till I looked close and saw a sluggish black trickle on the plank his mouth was against: and then turning him gently, I knew by the first feel of him that he was stone dead, for the rigidity of a corpse that's growing cold is a thing not easily

mistaken. God knows how he came to be on the deck: there may have come to him a death-struggle that rolled him over the edge of his bunk, or he had risen to summon help, being too feeble to shout for it. Anyway, there he was, dead. So I raised him—finding him to be shockingly light, little more indeed than a skeleton, and put him into his bunk again: and then just giving the news to Florence and her aunt as I stepped past, I told a couple of hands to lay aft with a hammock and needles and twine, and stitch the poor fellow up and carry him away forward for the sailor's last toss when the morning came.

Next morning found the weather unchanged, save that the wind was blowing a point more easterly. The sea had somewhat increased in height, and the brig was rolling with her decks full of water. I had the well sounded the moment I came on deck, but found the vessel staunch, which I accepted almost as a miracle, for she had been labouring heavily for many hours, and her creaking and groaning might have made any man believe that she was working all the oakum out of her. The haze brought the water-line within a mile of us. William Somers was on deck, and he said to me, 'Most unlucky weather this, sir. That hisland o' yours'll be heavin' in sight presently again, I allow. We've done nothen for the last three days but drift back to where we started from, and with the height of side the *Sairey Jane* shows, ye may reckon we've done all two mile an hour in that way.'

'I've made up my mind, Somers,' said I, 'when we've buried your poor mate to up helm and use this wind. It's idle trying for Australia. Ay, and it'll be idle trying for the Cape. There's nothing for it but to try and run into fine weather and get taken out of this mud barge by a ship. Why, even with a gale of wind astern, should we fetch the Australian coast in six weeks? No, and yet we have but six weeks' provisions aboard, living as we now do on half allowance, which, if it weren't for a bit of pickled goat's meat now and again and those crabs which will be all gone shortly, either through being devoured or through putrefying, would pretty nearly starve the two ladies.'

Well, we all went to breakfast at about a quarter before eight. The boy belonging to the *Sarah Jane* who waited upon us in the cabin came aft with the tea, and Florence and her aunt emerged from their berth. The first thing the old lady said was to ask me if we were making any progress towards Australia.

'Not an atom,' said I. 'If we're bound anywhere at all, it's to the island we're from.'

'My gracious!' she squealed, and Florence, stretching out her hands, cried out, 'Oh, Jack, what are we to do?'

I made my darling sit down by me, and explained to her and her aunt that the wind was blowing strong from the east, that an easterly wind, like a cat, has nine lives, that we were not sailing at all, but drifting dead to the westwards, that the weather was as

thick as mud and looked as if it meant to keep so, and that when we had buried the mate I intended to square away for the Cape of Good Hope.

'And suppose the wind should change and blow from the west,' said Aunt Damaris.

'Miss Hawke,' I replied, 'there's no use in supposing. Let me give you some of this tea. Lord, it looks very yellow this morning—quite forecastle tea, I declare. But no matter: we must consider milk bilious, and imagine that the doctor has ordered us not to drink it.'

'This part of our fearful voyage would not be so very awful if we had only more clothes,' moaned my poor little pet.

'There's no use complaining, Florence,' said Aunt Damaris. 'Mr. Jack cannot buy clothes for us.'

'Though I would if I could, my own,' cried I, grasping Florence's hand; 'ay, though they had to sink me over the side with a deep-sea lead at my feet to come at them.'

'Oh, I know you would do anything for me, Jack, and I am very wicked to complain,' said she, with the flash of a tear in her eye. I kissed her with a noble disregard of Aunt Damaris's presence, and the old lady, as was now customary with her, said nothing. In truth, ever since the poor thing had found out who I was, she had never been in a position to protest, and I felt that every kiss I gave Florence in the presence of her aunt furnished her with one more argument to use by-and-by in my favour when she and her brother should come to correspond about or talk over this singular courtship.

When we had done our very wretched breakfast—and miserable as it was, half of it was lost through the abominable jumping and rolling, and sickening squelching movements of the brig—I told them that I was going to bury the mate, and advised them to stop where they were, for it would be a cold, wet, and dismal service, and only fit to deepen their melancholy. They agreed to remain in the deckhouse. So looking into their cabin and finding a church service among the books there, I went on deck and told Shilling, who had relieved Somers, to get the body brought to the gangway and send the crew aft. Lucky it was for Aunt Damaris and my darling they were not present. Why, to be sure it does not do the most delicate-hearted of us harm to be brought face to face with whatever comes straight from God, as death does, but so many things which had nothing to do with death were mixed up with this sea-funeral that it was like to become a memory that could not benefit any one it took hold of; and I say therefore I was glad that Florence did not form one of the crowd who stood upon the brig's maindeck.

Glad was I when the ceremony was over and the body gone. You saw poor old Somers stare with a sort of wild wistfulness beyond the rail when the hammock flashed out of sight and the brig rolled wearily to windward with a hundred cries in her rigging

and a long moaning sob of water washing fair along her lee bends, as if his tough heart had gone overboard with his dead shipmate and he was waiting for it to come back and make a man of him again. And staggering and lurching, but all as quiet as mice, the men were making their way forward when I sang out to them to man the fore and main braces and stand by to haul the yards round square as the helm was put over.

'I'll tell you why,' I called to them, thinking an explanation was due to them, and guessing they wanted it from the look in their faces; 'this wind has been blowing for three days and nights, and if it hasn't drifted us pretty near to St. Paul's, you may take it, my lads, that that and Amsterdam Island are not far off. It's useless thinking of Australia in the face of an easterly wind and in a brig that won't go to wind'ard. So the bo'sun and Somers and I have come to the conclusion that we can't do better than up helm, and let this breeze blow us west-nor'west for the Cape of Good Hope—or rather for clear weather, and the first ship we can signal that'll take us off this scowbank. That's it, boys. Wheel there! let her go off—quietly. Watch her as she goes, my lad. Ease away your lee fore, and weather mainbraces.'

And I ran aft to the wheel, to watch the squab hull as she fell off. With the foretopsail sheeted home, and the foresail loosed ready for setting, she rolled and wallowed round on her old keel drily and handsomely. Every reef was shaken out, and the yards mastheaded, the topgallantsail set, and the mainsail with the weather clew up, and with a couple of hands stationed forward on the look-out, for I had not the least idea of our position, having seen nothing of the sun for three days, and incapable of judging our drift owing to the unguessable send of the seas which had helped her along faster than the wind had shoved her, the *Sarah Jane*, yielding to the pressure, went staggering forwards with a fierce sputtering and creaming of foam under her bows, pitching so heavily as to make one's legs useless without one's hands, her course west-nor'west, and the wind yelling in half a gale over the weather quarter out of the impenetrable mist.

Well, this turning tail proved a wise course after all, because for three more blessed days and nights did that east wind blow, thickening sea and sky at times till the brig was a mere phantom in it, swept onwards. I never got an observation; and within fifty or a hundred miles, maybe, I did not know where we were; but this did not trouble me, because, as we knew to our sorrow, we had countless leagues of sea-room before and behind and on either hand of us, and, as we steered, were bound to run down the Cape of Good Hope if we could only hold on as we were long enough.

Well, the night of the sixth day, dating from the first of the easterly wind, came and found the gale—for it was half a one, anyway,—moderating with a clearance around the sea. I turned in at midnight very anxious, wondering what we were to do if it should

come to blow from the westward, or even from the north, and for half an hour lay desperately restless and anxious under the old blanket that formed my bedclothes, till being dog-tired, as sailors say, I fell asleep and slept till daybreak. The thump of something against the deckhouse outside aroused me, and hearing the sound of voices singing out and ropes flung down, I instantly went on deck and found the watch bracing the yards round to a light southerly wind. Astern the sky was brightening fast, and the pink of the coming sun was sifting up into the blue from behind the sea and floating along the water there. The weather was as clear as glass, a few stars languishing low down past the bows, and a southerly swell coming up in indigo folds ruffled by the breeze.

'Well,' said I to Somers, who had charge, 'thank God that the wind is not west or north, anyway. Here's a wonderful change since midnight. Anything in sight, I wonder?'

I was looking astern when I said this, and as I spoke the sky there was burning fiercely, and on a sudden the rim of the sun shot up like a gush of flame, and in a breath it was brilliant daylight and the firmament a dome of deep blue with a wreath or two of cloud in the south and a brightening of the azure into the east till it was all white glory. I took my sight off the dazzling quarter, for it was more than I could bear, and looked searchingly along the sea-line. All at once a man who had been coiling down a rope close to where I was standing, cried in a breathless sort of fashion, 'Why, what's that there? *Smoke* is it?' With one hand against his forehead he pointed with the other a little way to the right of the sun, staring without a blink at the dazzle. Low as his cry was, others a little way beyond heard him, and three of them shouted in one voice 'A steamer's smoke, sir!' and joined us, pointing and bending and peering. Then I could see it plainly enough, a fine web-like dark line breaking away out of the haze of light and floating into the north. 'Get me the glass!' I cried. It was brought and placed in my hand. I pointed it to where the line of smoke terminated, and gradually worked the lens along to where the vapour issued from the sea, by that means accustoming my eye to the brilliance there. Again and again I had to drop the telescope to clear my sight of the water which the brightness brought into it, and all the while the men stood round me so still that I could hear their deep breathing. At last I sprang out of my kneeling posture.

'Men, she's heading our way. The funnel and spars are lifting quick. She's coming along hand over hand!' I shouted.

A wild cheer broke from them.

'Where's the ensign?' I bawled. 'Find it and hoist it, jack down, at the topgallantmast.'

Somers sprawled over to a small flag-locker close against the wheel, and hauled out an old ensign.

'Let go the topgallant halliards,' I sang out, 'that the sail

may be out of the road of the signal. Bend on and hoist away! up with it—up with it!’ and in a moment the flag, jack down, was mast-headed and fluttering its red folds fair upon the breeze.

All hands were now on deck, for there is somehow a magic in a piece of exciting news at sea that will rouse out sleepers without a touch of the hand or a sound of the voice: and they all stood near the deckhouse—a middling thick group—staring into the east. I was running to call Florence and Aunt Damaris when I saw them coming.

‘What is it, Mr. Jack—what is it?’ cried out the old lady in a sharp raw voice of wild excitement.

‘Look!’ I answered, pointing.

‘Aunt, it’s a steamer!’ shrieked Florence, and the sunlight flashed in her eyes as she strained them wide open.

‘Will she take us off the brig? Will she take us off the brig?’ called out the poor old lady, like one shouting in a fever.

‘Pray be calm, Miss Hawke,’ said I. ‘See up yonder—there’s a distress signal they’re bound to inquire into the meaning of. Oh, they’ll take us off, have no fear.’ And asking Shilling for the glass, I again knelt and examined the approaching vessel.

She was coming along at a fair pace, for when I looked this time her funnel was hove above the gleaming sea-line, and her masts, whether two or more, came into one as she headed dead for us. Yet the splendour of the morning bothered the eye, and it took me a tidy while to make sure that she *was* steering right on for us.

‘We’d better heave the brig to, Shilling,’ said I, ‘and get the gig ready for boarding the steamer.’

So the vessel was brought close with her maintopsail to the mast, courses hauled up and staysail halliards let go; then the gig that had been stowed forward bottom-up was hoisted over the side ready for use, and there being nothing more to do, I recommended the men to get their breakfast, and remained aft with Aunt Damaris and Florence watching the steamer grow as she swung up over the shining round of ocean. Hand in hand with my darling, I stood answering as best I could the feverish questions the old lady fired into me when the men were gone forward.

Half an hour after we had made out the smoke of her she was plain in the glass, a hand’s breadth this side the sea-line, the white water at her forefoot visible, and now I could make her out to be either barque- or brig-rigged, with a yellow funnel, a high bow, a black hull, the sparkle of gilt under her short bowsprit, and the answering pennant flying at the mainmasthead. I fancied at first she was a man-of-war by the squareness of her yards, and but I was soon undeceived by the slenderness of her beam the mercantile furl of her canvas. All hands had turned up afresh and were clustered aft watching: and so we all stood talking about her as foot by foot she swept along, drawing further away

from the brightness in the water, until porting her helm she stretched her length, slowing down her engines, whilst the gleaming stem-waves fell flat, and then she came to a dead stop, about five hundred fathoms distant from us,—a long, powerful iron ocean steamer of about two thousand tons register burden, slightly rolling upon the swell that made every polished object about her—glass, brass, bright masts, wet plates—dazzle out in the sunshine as if white fires leapt from her deck and sides.

There came a hail from her bridge : what it was I do not know. The gig was alongside : I told two of the men to jump into her, handed Aunt Damaris and Florence over, and followed them, singing out to Shilling that if they refused to take all hands, I'd return, but that the ladies must be got aboard and left there anyhow. As we approached the steamer I saw them unship the gangway and throw some steps over the side. A crowd of heads along the forward rail watched us, but the decks were almost deserted aft, and I was pretty sure from the appearance of the vessel that she was a cargo boat. We swept alongside : I jumped on the steps, handed Aunt Damaris up, then Florence, and, leaving the men in the boat, jumped on to the deck and looked around me.

Three or four men stood near the gangway : past them, aft, there was little to see, for the bridge and the deck-structures abaft the engine-room—I'm not sure of the terms steamboat men give their fittings—hindered the view. The people who received us stared hard ; I dare say they were astonished to see two ladies come out of such a brig as the *Sarah Jane*, and from the cut of my jib they might easily reckon that I had no concern in that old waggon.

'Can I speak to the captain?' said I to one of them.

'Certainly,' he responded ; 'I'm the captain.' He was a tall, hearty-looking chap, with a kind of shyness in his manner as he glanced from me to Aunt Damaris and Florence.

'Captain,' said I, 'you have come in good time. You find us in a bad plight. These ladies and I were passengers aboard the Australian liner *Strathmore*, that foundered in a collision on the night of the twenty-fifth of December—'

'Kindly come below, sir, and you, ladies,' said he, interrupting me ; and led the way to a companion, down which we passed into a cabin, small indeed for the size of the ship, but exceedingly comfortable and breezy ; with polished mahogany fittings, a table, a short row of cabins on either hand, and open spaces abaft furnished with sofas, over which were portholes or scuttles. He asked us to be seated, but Aunt Damaris's heart was full ; she burst into tears and fell to hysterically thanking him for preserving us from a dreadful fate, and in the hurry and feverishness of her mind was rattling out the whole of our story to him, when Florence, who was also crying, dear heart ! gently interrupted her and gave me a chance to relate the yarn. This I did. The captain listened attentively. He had known the *Strathmore* well and

had also met little Thompson, and he was much concerned and astonished when I told him that of all five boats the gig alone had fetched St. Paul's, and that though I had coasted Amsterdam Island in the brig, and had hove-to and burnt flare-tins, no response had been made, no sight of anybody living had been visible.

'Well, sir,' said he, 'how can I serve you?'

'By taking us all aboard this steamer. We can do nothing with the brig; she won't go to wind'ard; if we're not taken out of her we must knock about and starve, for nothing short of half a gale of wind astern will give her headway;' and I told him of our struggles in her during the week, and what stock of provisions remained.

'How many are there of you, all told?' I gave him the number. 'Well,' said he, 'I'll take you with pleasure. But I can't do anything for the brig. She must be let go.'

'She's good for nothing else,' said I. 'In my opinion she ought to be scuttled, for if she's found drifting she may tempt some shipmaster to put a crew aboard, and she's bound to starve them.'

He laughed and answered he didn't like the notion of scuttling her. She was apparently sound, and he might get into trouble if he sank her; it was one thing to succour people in distress who claimed his assistance, but he had nothing to do with the brig. We might scuttle her if we chose, but *he'd* have no hand in it.

However, it was a matter of no interest whatever to argue upon, so without more ado he and I went on deck, leaving the ladies below, where, putting his head over the side, he sang out to the men in the gig to row aboard the brig and bring off their mates; and at the same time he gave orders for one of the steamer's boats to be sent to the vessel to fetch all the provisions that could be come across out of her. Whilst this was doing I stood with the captain talking. From him I learnt that the steamer's name was the *Clanwilliam*, that she was a cargo vessel full up with wool, bound from Sydney, New South Wales, to the port of London direct, that the only passengers aboard were his wife and her sister, both of whom he supposed were still abed, though the steward should rouse them up presently if they did not make haste to turn out, and he made me feel very comfortable in my mind by saying he'd answer for it that they had linen enough between them to give my two friends a shift of what they needed.

'Well, Captain,' said I, 'I may as well tell you that my two friends are one of them the sister and the other a daughter of a rich Australian who lives at Clifton, near Bristol; they'll want you to treat them as passengers, and you may depend that no bill that your owners may send to Mr. Alphonso Hawke will be thought too heavy.'

'Oh, that'll be all right,' he answered. 'Alphonso Hawke? I think I know that name. I've heard it mentioned in Sydney.'

He's a father and brother of the ladies below, eh? Well, well! I'm glad to be the means of helping them.'

The gig was some time in bringing off the rest of the men, and I explained to the captain that the reason was, there were two maimed seamen aboard who would need to be handled cautiously; but both boats were not much longer away than five-and-twenty minutes, and then you saw them deep as their gunwales almost, lifting towards us over the azure folds, their oars sparkling as they rose and fell. They arrived alongside, the two injured men were carefully handed up and carried forward, the others followed and helped the steamer's crew to get the provisions from the brig aboard, and when this was done the *Strathmore's* boat was hoisted over the rail and the other boat re-stowed. It was at this moment that Aunt Damaris and Florence came out of the cabin and stood some distance abaft the mainmast looking at the brig. I joined them, whilst the captain mounted the bridge. In a few moments the peculiar vibration of revolving engines was felt in the planking under the feet. The brig drew abeam as the steamer came round to her course; and high out of water, with her maintopsail aback, the ensign flying jack down at her masthead, the trysail boom swinging as she rolled, there she lay, an abandoned vessel, so pathetic in her desertion and solitude, with the endless leagues of blue stretching away past her into the bright sky of the south, that I was more moved than I have the courage to confess. She had saved us from God alone knows what dreadful fate, and I seemed to think of her as of a living thing capable of such grief and passion as might visit a human heart as I looked at her receding astern, left helpless in the midst of the ocean, and thought '*That is her reward!*' Laugh at me, mates, if you will, but if a deserted, tossing ship which a man has never set eyes on before, will put sad fancies into his head, how much more should he be affected by the sight of the vessel that has rescued him, and one dearer to him than his own life, from a situation of deadly peril, floating away echoless, helpless into the mystery and the grave of the measureless, pitiless deep? I knew that my old shipmates had much the same sort of feeling about her that I had, for I saw them all looking in silence at her, whilst the steamer feeling the propulsion of the churning screw was raising white water under either bow and sending it spinning aft into a streaming riband of wake that was as full of colour with its bells and bubbles and whirling patches of snow and hollowing frosty eddies as a diamond necklace is in candlelight, till the sense of rescue surging uppermost in them along with the feeling that they were homeward bound, they gave out their hearts in three hurricane cheers which went rattling along the water in a wild farewell to the diminishing brig. The exultant shout made me look at my darling, and our eyes met. Speak we could not; I could only take her hand and look at her and she at me till the

gathering tears forced her to avert her face, whilst Aunt Damaris stood in a sort of trance, her hands convulsively locked, staring after the brig. 'Ladies,' said the captain, coming up to us, 'I expect my wife will be up by this time. Let me take you below that you and she may settle about cabins for yourselves, where you may make yourselves comfortable for breakfast, which no doubt you're ready for, and which should be on the table in half an hour.'

CHAPTER XLIII.

WHAT WILL MR. HAWKE SAY?

THE passage home was too uneventful to write about, even if I had room for it, or you had patience to listen to more talk about the sea. There was no longer the interest of the sailing ship. Calms and strong breezes we had in plenty, but they had nothing to do with us. Day and night onwards the metal fabric shoved, furling her canvas in the stagnant air or the head wind, or expanding it to the favouring breeze; and rounding the Cape, we climbed our way northwards over the equator into the tropic of Cancer, with familiar stars rising higher and higher over our bows every night, and constellations in the south settling out of sight behind the sea.

But the run was uneventful, at least from the shore-going point of view; the worst that happened to us was a strong head wind that delayed us over a week; and so I'll pass over it, over the hours Florence and I spent together, over our conversations with Aunt Damaris, over the kind and liberal treatment we received aboard the *Clanwilliam*; over many a matter which to relate would swell this yarn out into the longest story that was ever written, in order to come bluntly to the date of the fifteenth of March.

That was the date on which the steamer arrived off Gravesend, where I went ashore. Florence and her aunt had been landed at Plymouth for the convenience of being able to take train at once to Bristol. They wanted me to accompany them, but I told them it would suit me better to proceed direct to London in the steamer, there lay in a fresh stock of clothes, and then go down to my uncle's house. And yet, though it was to be but a short parting—as Florence and I hoped and prayed, and as Aunt Damaris promised—what a leave-taking it was, when it came to their going over the side into the cutter that was to carry them ashore! You'd have thought we were never going to meet again. Twice Aunt Damaris drew back from the gangway to kiss me—ay, boys, to *kiss me*! whilst as to my heart's delight—— But avast, Jack! you're out of all danger now, so tail on like a man to the end of this story and coil down and clear out and be hanged to you! for your jaw

bids fair to carry you on till the crack o' doom shuts up all hands.

Well, you see, boys, that shipwrecked as I had been I had saved my purse. It was in my pocket when I tumbled into the gig, before the *Strathmore* foundered; and in it were a ten-pound note and some sovereigns. This very easily carried me from Gravesend to London, by Tilbury; and the first thing I did when I got out at Fenchurch Street Station, was to buy me a bag, a nightshirt, a brush and comb, and other needful articles of that kind; and then, calling a cab, I went to the Tavistock Hotel in Covent Garden, where I wrote my name down in the address book as coolly, faith, as if I were just from Manchester or Leeds, instead of from St. Paul's Island in the Indian Ocean.

It was in the evening; I dined, and then wrote to my uncle, contenting myself with giving him the merest outline of my adventures with Florence and Aunt Damaris, and added that when I had rigged myself afresh—all my clothes having gone down with the *Strathmore*—I'd take leave to spend a few weeks with him at Clifton.

I spent the next morning in going to my bank to see how much I was worth, likewise in ordering clothes and linen, and so forth; and after lunch I went to the office of Duncan, Golightly, and Company, to inquire if anything had been heard of the long-boat and quarter-boats belonging to the *Strathmore*. There is no occasion to relate my conversation with Mr. Golightly, beyond saying that the news of the foundering of the vessel had been received three weeks prior to the date of my arrival in London, and that news of the boats, excepting the one in charge of the carpenter, had been telegraphed, though, until I called, the gig had remained unaccounted for. The long-boat, Mr. Golightly informed me, had, while running during the night, been nearly swamped by a sea by which she lost her lights and compass. Unable to make a true course, Thompson had missed the island of St. Paul's wide, and was subsequently picked up by a Dutch steamer, ninety miles east-south-east of that rock. The first lifeboat, during that same night, had sighted a small vessel when she was nearly into her, had hailed her, and her people were taken aboard, but the captain declined to seek for the other boats, and held on with his voyage to the Cape of Good Hope. The second and third boats had mistaken Amsterdam Island for St. Paul's, and the crews and passengers had landed there, but they had not been on the island an hour when they sighted a full-rigged ship standing to the westward, and at once jumped into the boats and gave chase, eventually making themselves seen by her, after rowing and sailing for six hours. Of the fourth boat I may as well say here that she was never heard of, and it was supposed that she had foundered during the night. She was in charge of the carpenter, and her people consisted of Thompson Tucker, seven seamen, and six 'tweendeck passengers.

It was on my return to Covent Garden that I found this telegram from my uncle awaiting me :

'Thank God you are safe. Come to us as soon as you possibly can. All well here. Heaps of news.'

At last the materials I needed for a wardrobe reached me, and fully equipped with all the toggery I required, I went down to Bristol, meaning to take my relatives unannounced. My heart thumped hard under my waistcoat as I drove up to Clifton.

The cab stopped, I sprang out and rang the bell, and whilst I waited for the door to be opened I stole a glance round the grounds—at the seat up in the corner where I had told Florence I loved her, at the summer-house where I had sat grinding my passion into the earth with my heel through the mortification I had felt on finding that Florence had not invited me to the dinner my relatives had been asked to. The man-servant appeared, and when he saw me he gave a great start, and then broke into an immense grin. I dare say he remembered the two half-crowns I gave him one evening for bringing me certain letters.

'Is my uncle at home?'

'Yes, sir: he'll be glad to see you, Mr. Seymour, sir;' and I had pulled off my hat to hang it up when my uncle appeared at the end of the hall. It was just a shout, and then a rush and a mad grab at my hands.

'My dear Jack! my dear Jack! my dear Jack!' was all he could say.

'Here I am at last!' I cried. 'My dear uncle, how are you? How is my aunt—how are my dear cousins?'

A loud shriek on the staircase announced the presence of Sophie. The dear creature came whirling down like a squall, and in a breath I stood suffocating in the most extravagantly hearty embrace I was ever saluted with. Her resounding cry brought out my aunt and Amelia; and now behold me, the centre of an ardent and quite overcome group, revolving like a top to their handshaking, hardly knowing whether to cry or to laugh, dragged here and there till an eye-witness might have gone away and sworn he had beheld a free-fight, and at last carried off by my uncle into the drawing-room, where I was plumped into an arm-chair and instantly surrounded.

They were not newly-born infants when I quitted Bristol, and consequently seven months had not worked the least discernible change in them. Maybe there was a slight increase in the breadth of my uncle's smile and in the heartiness of his laugh, as if the purpose of his life now lay in the steady development and improvement of these two physical qualities, and it is just possible that the train of my aunt's dress may have grown practically longer since I was last in her company, but in no other respects were they altered.

Our conversation at the first start I could no more put down

than I could attempt to express in writing the quick jabbering of a crowd. Whole broadsides of questions were fired into me, ejaculation after ejaculation let fly, until my uncle, seeing that we might sit together thus for the rest of the year and yet come no nearer plain sense and a clear narrative, whipped me off to my bedroom and there left me, to join the family at my leisure; 'and don't be in a hurry, Jack,' says he, 'for I can assure you we want time to cool.'

However, I did not stay long upstairs, and when I returned to the drawing-room a glance at my cousins and aunt enabled me to guess that we should now be enabled to make some headway with our conversation. They all drew about me afresh, and Sophie cried out, 'Jack, you are looking wonderfully well—quite handsome, I assure you.'

'Brown as a nut, Jack,' exclaimed Amelia. 'Certainly the sea agrees with some people.'

'But how can I be smiling and talking to you and looking at you?' said Sophie. 'Oh, Jack, can I ever forget that you followed Florence to Australia without giving me the least idea of your intention?'

'Now, girls,' bawled my uncle, 'let's have no nonsense. Only talk what you mean, and then we'll get along.'

'I suppose Florence and her aunt have arrived at Clifton Lodge,' said I.

'Oh dear yes,' answered Sophie. 'We called upon Florence yesterday. Papa and Mr. Hawke are friends again now, Jack. But do you know that Emily Hawke is dead—poor Emily whom we used to meet in the bath chair?'

'Is it possible? The news will have been a heavy blow to Florence, I fear,' said I. 'When did she die?'

'On Christmas night,' responded my aunt.

'Heaven preserve us!' I exclaimed, 'that was the night on which we were wrecked. Mr. Hawke came very near to being rendered childless altogether on Christmas night.'

'Poor fellow, it nearly broke his heart,' said my uncle. 'You'll find a wonderful change in him. No more pomps nor vanities, Jack. Sorrow has caught hold of him as you sailors catch hold of a swab, and wrung him out. He invited me to the funeral, and then we struck up an acquaintance again, and since then we've been good friends. He was very fond of Emily—she was his pet, I think: far ahead of Florence in his affection.'

'It was very sad,' said my aunt.

'How is Florence bearing the news? for it will be fresh to her,' I asked Sophie.

'Pretty well, I think,' answered Sophie. 'She has gone through so much since she left home that grief can't be expected to pierce so deep as it would had she not been shipwrecked and gone in fear of her life for I don't know how many weeks.'

'A fine bit of reasoning that, Sophie,' said my uncle. 'But it'll do, my dear. The truth is, Jack, Florence is too full of what the old poets would call your ravishing idea, to suffer acutely from any blow that isn't aimed at your lug.'

'That's about it,' observed Amelia.

'And can you give me any news of Mr. Morecombe?' I inquired, looking from one to another.

'He's not been seen in these parts since the *Strathmore* sailed,' answered my uncle.

'There is no doubt that he and Mr. Hawke have quarrelled,' exclaimed Sophie.

'You know nothing for certain then?' said I.

'You see, my boy,' observed my uncle, 'the subject's a delicate one. Hawke knew that I was aware Morecombe had left the *Strathmore* sea-sick, and that you had pursued the voyage with Florence. We did not speak until after Emily's death. The poor old chap's bereavement made me anxious to say nothing to pain him or give words to any unpleasant memory. But you'll get all the news about Morecombe when you meet Florence.'

'At all events, Jack, you may take it from me,' said Sophie, 'that you have nothing more to fear from that odious young man.'

'It'll be three weeks ago, dating from yesterday, Jack,' said my uncle, 'since Mr. Hawke called upon me in a hurry, with a face as white as your shirt. "Mr. Seymour," he cried, "I have just received some dreadful news from the owners of the *Strathmore*. She has been in collision and foundered in the Indian Ocean. Only one boat picked up by a small vessel has been as yet accounted for. My daughter and sister were in the gig in charge of your nephew. Oh, my God!" he cried, hiding his face and sobbing terribly, "if my daughter should have perished! if my poor girl should be drowned!" The news was a terrible shock to me, Jack,' continued my uncle, 'all of us listening to him with grave faces and in dead silence; "I thought of you, my lad, and how your young life might have been cut off by a bit of wild romance in the manufacture of which I was pretty nearly as guilty as you. However, I bottled up my feelings and put a good face on the matter, and told him that you were a sailor, that if the ladies were with you they were in first-rate hands, and I urged him to wait a bit before giving way to his grief, since any hour might bring the news of the other boat's safety. Well, Jack, a few days ago there came a note from him: "My dear Mr. Seymour, I have just received a telegram from Plymouth announcing that my daughter and sister have been landed there by the steamship *Clanwilliam*, and that your nephew has proceeded in the vessel to London." The letter was to that effect, and it wound up with a fervent thanksgiving to God. Jack, it did me good to get that letter. The fear of your loss had weighed very heavily upon us all, my lad.'

He seized and held my hand, whilst poor Sophie wept and my

aunt said, 'We were miserable from the moment Mr. Hawke called down to the hour at which we received his letter telling us you and Florence were safe.'

I was not a little moved to look around upon their kind faces, and judge by what I saw there that had I been their son or brother their affection for me could hardly be much deeper than it was. I fell to talking to them about the voyage, and, as you may guess, had so much to say that it was within half an hour of dinner-time before I brought my yarn to a close. I don't know that I skipped a single point of consequence. I told them of the name I had shipped under, how impressed Aunt Damaris had been by it, how I had shared one of the cabins with Morecombe, his manner of speaking about old Hawke, his fearful sea-sickness and departure from the vessel off the Isle of Wight, and in all my life I never heard people laugh as my relatives did—one and all of them—my aunt crimson and my uncle lying back till I thought he would explode, when I described Morecombe's drunken behaviour as he went over the side and Aunt Damaris's appearance as she watched him. Then I gave them an account of the voyage, the passengers, Aunt Damaris's liking for me as Mr. Egerton, and so on, till I came to the collision, and our night in the gig, and our stay on St. Paul's, and our getting away in the brig. Why, lads, until I came to tell the story, I protest I hardly knew what a real romance it was. Yet you'd have known there was the proper sort of stuff in it to seize and hold the attention, rudely and briefly related as it was by me, had you watched my listeners following every word that fell from my lips with a sort of fixed breathless stare at me, as though they feared if they did so much as wink their eyes they'd miss something.

'Wonderful!' shouted my uncle when I had made an end. 'Jack, it's the biggest thing in shipwrecks I ever heard of in my life.'

'What a romance!' cried my aunt. 'Think of two lovers cast away upon such a rock as Mr. Jack describes.'

'With an old aunt to look after them,' said Amelia.

'Oh, Jack,' exclaimed Sophie, 'when Florence is your wife, what a deal you will have to talk about!'

'Meanwhile,' said my uncle, 'dinner will be ready soon, so let's get ready for it.'

Well, right through the dinner the talk was all about the shipwreck and the island; and afterwards, when my uncle wanted his cigar and exhorted his wife and daughters to withdraw and leave us alone, they refused to go. No, they liked the smell of smoke; it was ridiculous to ask them to withdraw, there must really be a limit to men's tyranny. And they clung to their seats whilst I went on yarning about Florence and the *Strathmore* and Aunt Damaris.

'And now, Jack,' said my uncle, smoking with his feet hoisted up, 'what do you think old Hawke means to do?'

'I only wish I knew,' said I.

'Why, papa, what *can* he do? particularly after Florence and Jack have been cast away together,' exclaimed Sophie. 'Of course he'll sanction their marriage.'

'I really don't see how he can help it,' observed my aunt.

'Anyway,' remarked my uncle, 'you saved her and her aunt's life, and that ought to make a great hole in the old chap's gratitude.'

'I can't pretend that I *saved* their lives,' said I. 'We took our chance together and came out of the mess safely.'

'And what d'ye call steering the gig through a gale of wind and navigating the brig for a week?' cried my uncle. 'Would they have saved their lives without you?'

'Not so much as you think is due to me, uncle,' said I very truthfully. 'But no matter about that. Thank God my darling *is* safe—at home at last on solid English earth. It's enough for me to know.'

'I don't fancy,' said Amelia, 'in spite of your experiences, Jack, with Florence and her aunt, that Mr. Hawke would have been disposed to favour you. People's natures, you know, are not to be changed in a few months by things which don't affect them very violently, and Mr. Hawke's prejudices against you and his views on the subject of blood are much too stubborn to be shaken by a shipwreck out of which his daughter has come safely.'

I sat looking on her with a long face.

'But,' continued she, 'Emily's death has undoubtedly changed his character. Everybody says it has made him less worldly. He is very regular at church and looks dreadfully sad. When I think of this change, and of the still further softening effect Florence's safety will have had upon him, I am of opinion that you will not find him objecting to your marrying her.'

'I'm glad you wound up in that way, Amelia,' said I, 'for hang me if ever a speech opened more dismally.'

'Amelia's too oracular,' observed Sophie. 'However, I agree in what she says.'

'There is another consideration,' exclaimed my aunt. 'Miss Hawke is now Mr. Jack's friend.'

'Ay, tooth and nail,' said I. 'If it depends upon her, you may look upon me as a married man.'

'Well, Jack,' cried my uncle, 'boil me if you don't deserve the girl. Such perseverance is worthy of the sort of courtship that was customary when I was a lad—when love was love, not a twopenny spell of ogling followed by a skedaddle. Why, dash my wig,' he exclaimed, eyeing me admiringly, 'but she'll make ye a rich man though. Now poor Emily's gone, there's nothing 'twixt Florence and her papa's will, unless the old fellow goes off his head and signs away everything he has to a hospital.'

I waved my hand with a young lover's profound indifference

to money. 'If I marry her, it'll be for herself,' said I. 'Let the condition be that I take her in the clothes she stands in and with nothing else, and I'd thank God for bestowing upon me the noblest gift that ever enriched mortal heart.'

'Those are the sentiments for me!' cried my uncle. 'But at the same time, Jack, don't go and make an ass of yourself by repeating them to old Hawke. You know he might take you at your word.'

'Oh, papa, how horribly prosaic you are!' exclaimed Sophie. 'Jack's ideas are beautiful, and it's a shame to spoil them. But do let us all go into the drawing-room now; this tobacco smoke is quite suffocating.'

Well, lads, whatever my fortune was to be I was not long to be kept waiting in suspense. Unknown to me, Sophie that evening sent a line to Florence to tell her that I had arrived; and next day, shortly after luncheon, whilst I was walking with my dear cousin in the grounds, talking to her about my darling, and how over and over again she had owned her love for me, a man in livery arrived from Clifton Lodge with a letter addressed to me. My heart set off like the driving-wheel of a locomotive. I looked at the handwriting: it was a woman's, but it was not Florence's. The enclosure ran thus:

'DEAR MR. JACK,—Will you come and dine quietly with us this evening at half-past six? But as my brother and I have something to say to you, if you can manage to come, say at four o'clock, we shall be very pleased indeed to see you. Florence does not know I am writing, or you may be sure she would send her love. The servant will bring back your answer. Yours very sincerely, DAMARIS HAWKE.'

'P.S.—I am all anxiety to see you again.'

Without ado I trotted into the house, wrote an answer accepting the invitation, and promising to do myself the pleasure of calling at the hour named, and despatched it by the servant, scarcely heeding that Aunt Damaris was pretty sure to grin at my handwriting, whose tremulousness would have disgraced a man of ninety. The instant the liveried gentleman was out of sight I bounded over to Sophie and thrust Aunt Damaris's letter into her hand. 'What do you think of *that*?' I shouted.

She immediately devoured it with a face that was a study for its agitation.

'Oh, Jack!' she cried, 'it's all come about! it's all come about! They wouldn't invite you in this way if they didn't mean to give Florence to you. Oh, you lucky boy! Jack, I must kiss you!' And kiss me she did, pouring a hundred congratulations into me as she stepped back to survey me, and ended in catching hold of my arm and running me into the house to seek Amelia and her mother, and show them the letter.

I took fifty minutes to dress myself, and then had to wait three

quarters of an hour. Mighty pleased was I by the cut the tailor had given my dress-clothes, and not a little satisfied with the ocean-brown that tinted my face and made me look as I surely never had appeared during the three years I had passed in knocking about London. Before I quitted the house my relations gathered about me to fortify me with a thousand good wishes. 'Don't be too sentimental, Jack,' my uncle said. 'Love is a fine thing, much too good to starve; so mind your eye, my lad. Don't let your emotions give Hawke a chance. Mind now! for I know what poetical young men are.'

I shook hands all round as if I were going on another voyage, or to my execution, and jumping into the phaeton was rattled off to Clifton Lodge. It was only a few minutes' drive, but there was a vast deal of thought packed into it. Talk of compressing the essence of a bullock into a small tin can! As many fancies as would have served me for a twelvemonth were jammed into that short journey; and when the phaeton halted abreast of Clifton Lodge my brow was cold with dew distilled no doubt by an imagination that had been doing in five minutes the work of pretty nearly as many years. I rang the bell, and hearing it tinkling was afraid I had pulled it unnecessarily hard. What a fine house it was! Not to my taste, to be sure; but nevertheless a kind of palace in its numerous shining windows, all superbly draped, its conservatories, the statues atop of it, the pillars, the terrace on the left, and so on. During the minute I was kept waiting, up swarmed the memory of my first visit, the walk to the Cathedral, the drive, the lunch—why, when I thought of what had happened since, that visit might have been made a hundred years ago.

The door was flung open, and I entered. The man-servant, taking my name, ushered me into the drawing-room, and I sat down, feeling for the moment, amidst that wilderness of gleaming marbles and mirrors, tables, curtains, and the deuce knows what besides, almost as lonely as I did that night on St. Paul's when I looked up at the black rim of the crater and saw the stars hanging over it. How often had I thought of *this* room during that time; contrasted the splendours of it with the miserable hut, the old creaking brig's deck-house! And now here I was, sitting in it, waiting—for what?

The door opened, and Mr. Hawke entered, and close in his wake was Aunt Damaris. I looked, scarcely knowing if *another* was behind, but the door closed upon those two. I rose and gave them a bow. Hawke put out his hand, but before I could take it, Aunt Damaris brushed past him with both hands extended.

'Mr. Jack, I am glad to see you again. I am glad indeed to see you again,' she cried. 'Oh, what memories your face recalls! How are you? You look wonderfully well.'

I thought she meant to embrace me—it wouldn't have been

the first time, as you know—but she contented herself with holding my hands and continuing to shake them for some time, meanwhile peering steadfastly at my face with the old familiar pecking gesture. The warmth of her reception put me speedily at my ease, and when she released me I gravely shook hands with Mr. Hawke, expressing in a few words the deep sympathy I felt for him in his affliction. Aunt Damaris was in crape, and he was clad from head to foot in the blackest of black cloth, and yet the suggestion of mourning lay not nearly so conspicuously in his clothes as in his face and bearing. He had the appearance of a man utterly bowed down and crushed by sorrow. He stood with a kind of stoop, his skin was of the colour of dry sand, and I could trace but little of the sharp gleam that I once took notice of in his eyes. He merely bowed to the few words I let fall about his loss, and, asking me to resume my chair, seated himself at some little distance from me with his back to the light. Aunt Damaris, on the other hand, drew a chair close to me. 'Mr. Seymour,' said she, 'is it not strange to find ourselves safe and snug at home after our adventures? My brother wonders how we could have survived so much downright misery. Oh, I must tell you that I have not forgotten Mr. Shilling and the *Strathmore's* men. I sent the firm some money to distribute among them. I hope it will be given to them.'

'Oh, sure,' said I.

'And here am I in England again,' she rattled, 'after having in vain endeavoured to get to my home in Australia.'

'I presume you will be making another attempt before long, Miss Hawke,' said I, with a glance at her brother, who was eyeing me without offering to speak.

'Oh, certainly. My heart as well as my home is in Sydney. But you'll not catch me making the voyage in a sailing ship again, Mr. Jack. What dreadful calms we encountered, do you remember? Alphonso, you cannot imagine what we suffered on the equator.'

'Damaris,' said he, speaking very slowly but without any of his old haws and hums and word-brandishings, 'perhaps you will give me an opportunity to thank Mr. Seymour for his attention to you and Florence during your hardships.'

'I beg that you won't thank me, Mr. Hawke,' I exclaimed. 'I have been sufficiently rewarded by the confidence your sister reposed in me and by having seen your daughter safe out of that shipwreck.'

'Well,' he continued, with a painful smile, 'I must thank you if only as an excuse to conduct the conversation to a subject of deep interest, I am sure, to all three of us. The terrible blow that has shattered my health and destroyed my spirits——'

'My dear Alphonso!' briskly expostulated Aunt Damaris.

'Finds me,' he went on, with a slow look at her, 'but little in the mood to reason upon the motives which were influencing me when you and I first made acquaintance, or to offer any

remarks upon your pursuit of Florence. I need not deny, Mr. Seymour, that I was very greatly deceived in the character of the young gentleman whom I had wished to see united to my child. I implicitly accept my sister's story of a very great piece of impertinence and vulgarity on his part——'

'Leaving the ship drunk, as you know, Mr. Seymour,' interrupted Aunt Damaris, 'and swearing dreadfully.'

'And his subsequent behaviour,' continued Mr. Hawke, 'has been——'

'He is actually going to be married!' cried out Aunt Damaris. 'There's a pretty lover! In a few months he forgets all about the young lady he pretended he was fond enough of to follow to Australia, and offers his lovely person to another! I wish to goodness she had seen him leave the *Strathmore*. Oh, Alphonso, you are well rid of him. He's a most ignoble creature.'

'Damaris,' exclaimed Mr. Hawke, 'I'd rather not discuss him. He is really nothing to us now. Florence's aversion was sound, and I admit the wisdom of it. And, Mr. Seymour,' said he, with a faint touch of the old haw, haw sounding in his voice for a moment, 'it is only proper I should tell you that just as I was mistaken in Mr. Morecombe so I erred in my judgment of you. I wanted my way and you were thwarting me, and my temper obstructed my view. You have since most honourably justified your claims upon my attention as a young man very sincerely devoted to my child, and it weighs with me—it weighs with me,' he exclaimed with a heavy sigh.

I stepped over to him and took his hand. 'I am heartily obliged to you for your handsome words,' I said. 'I love your daughter truly, as she knows. Without her I dare not think how blank the world would be to me. I could not help loving her from the beginning, and I certainly will not now excuse myself for being audacious enough to dream of her then; but for having given you offence in the past, I ask your pardon, Mr. Hawke.'

'There is no need,' he replied. 'We did not know each other, and I will not say you had no right to resent my treatment. Mr. Seymour, my child is a precious trust—she is the only one remaining to me—you will be good to her and cherish her?'

'Do you give her to me?' I asked, half breathlessly.

He bowed his head. I looked from him to Aunt Damaris, and sprang to her side.

'Oh, Miss Hawke!' I cried deliriously, 'is this due to your intercession? If so, may God bless you! may God bless you!'

'Mr. Jack,' she cried, holding my hand and fondling it, 'you deserve her. I have been thrown with you under strange circumstances, have seen your character, and I am grateful to think that Florence has found such a man for a husband. I told you I would conceal nothing from my brother. I have related everything to him—how you tricked me as Mr. Egerton, and what

your behaviour has been as Jack Seymour. In what way but this should such an adventure as curs end? My brother has no other desire now than to see Florence happy; and with you she *will* be happy—she could be happy with nobody else—and Alphonso knows it.'

I was turning to address him—to pour out in heaven alone knows what sort of English the delight with which my heart was overcharged—when Aunt Damaris most fortunately stopped me by rising.

'Alphonso,' said she, 'Florence is all impatience to see her lover. Shall we go and send her to him?' He left his chair very quietly, and coming over to me offered his hand. I held it in silence, for there were tears in his eyes, and in the face of them I hardly knew what to say. He then went out of the room, followed by Aunt Damaris, who stood a moment in the door to look round and nod and smile at me and blow me a kiss with her old lean fingers.

I remained near one of the tables waiting, with my heart hammering in my breast till the clamour of it in my ears half stunned me. I was not long kept listening. The door was pushed open and my darling entered; a gleam of the afternoon sunshine streamed through the curtains in one of the western windows full on her; radiant it made her look despite the mourning in which she was clad; her bright hair shone with a golden tint, lovely was the deepening of the colour of her eyes by the soft warm blush on her cheeks; she lingered a moment or two with drooping head, peeping at me through her lashes with a timid smile. But what was the good of hanging in the wind, mates? She was mine—she knew it; and when I held open my arms to her she fled to me, and in a breath I had her heart against mine and my lips upon hers.

'This is the end of our shipwreck, Jack,' said she when I let her speak.

'Ay, my darling, my pet, my love!' I cried; 'the end of our shipwreck, and the very last passage of Jack's Courtship.'

THE END.

A Humble Remonstrance.

WE have recently enjoyed a quite peculiar pleasure: hearing, in some detail, the opinions about the art they practise of Mr. Walter Besant and Mr. Henry James; two men certainly of very different calibre: Mr. James so precise of outline, so cunning of fence, so scrupulous of finish, and Mr. Besant so genial, so friendly, with so persuasive and humorous a vein of whim: Mr. James the very type of the deliberate artist, Mr. Besant the impersonation of good nature. That such doctors should differ will excite no great surprise; but one point in which they seem to agree fills me, I confess, with wonder. For they are both content to talk about the 'art of fiction;' and Mr. Besant, waxing exceedingly bold, goes on to oppose this so-called 'art of fiction' to the 'art of poetry.' By the art of poetry he can mean nothing but the art of verse, an art of handicraft, and only comparable with the art of prose. For that heat and height of sane emotion which we agree to call by the name of poetry, is but a libertine and vagrant quality; present, at times, in any art, more often absent from them all; too seldom present in the prose novel, too frequently absent from the ode and epic. Fiction is in the same case; it is no substantive art, but an element which enters largely into all the arts but architecture. Homer, Wordsworth, Phidias, Hogarth, and Salvini, all deal in fiction; and yet I do not suppose that either Hogarth or Salvini, to mention but these two, entered in any degree into the scope of Mr. Besant's interesting lecture or Mr. James's charming essay. The art of fiction, then, regarded as a definition, is both too ample and too scanty. Let me suggest another; let me suggest that what both Mr. James and Mr. Besant had in view was neither more nor less than the art of narrative.

But Mr. Besant is anxious to speak solely of 'the modern English novel,' the stay and bread-winner of Mr. Mudie; and in the author of the most pleasing novel on that roll, 'All Sorts and Conditions of Men,' the desire is natural enough. I can conceive

then, that he would hasten to propose two additions, and read thus: the art of *fictitious* narrative in *prose*.

Now the fact of the existence of the modern English novel is not to be denied; materially, with its three volumes, leaded type, and gilded lettering, it is easily distinguishable from other forms of literature; but to talk at all fruitfully of any branch of art, it is needful to build our definitions on some more fundamental ground than binding. Why, then, are we to add 'in prose'? The 'Odyssey' appears to me among the best of romances; the 'Lady of the Lake' to stand high in the second order; and Chaucer's tales and prologues to contain more of the matter and art of the modern English novel than the whole treasury of Mr. Mudie. Whether a narrative be written in blank verse or the Spenserian stanza, in the long period of Gibbon or the chipped phrase of Charles Reade, the principles of the art of narrative must be equally observed. The choice of a noble and swelling style in prose affects the problem of narration in the same way, if not to the same degree, as the choice of measured verse; for both imply a closer synthesis of events, a higher key of dialogue, and a more picked and stately strain of words. If you are to refuse 'Don Juan,' it is hard to see why you should include 'Zanoni' or (to bracket works of very different value) the 'Scarlet Letter'; and by what discrimination are you to open your doors to the 'Pilgrim's Progress' and close them on the 'Faery Queen'? To bring things closer home, I will here propound to Mr. Besant a conundrum. A narrative called 'Paradise Lost' was written in English verse by one John Milton; what was it then? It was next translated by Chateaubriand into French prose; and what was it then? Lastly, the French translation was, by some inspired compatriot of George Gilfillan (and of mine), turned bodily into an English novel; and, in the name of clearness, what was it then?

But, once more, why should we add 'fictitious'? The reason why is obvious. The reason why not, if something more recondite, does not want for weight. The art of narrative, in fact, is the same, whether it is applied to the selection and illustration of a real series of events or of an imaginary series. Boswell's 'Life of Johnson' (a work of cunning and inimitable art) owes its success to the same technical manœuvres as (let us say) 'Tom Jones': the clear conception of certain characters of man, the choice and presentation of certain incidents out of a great number that offered, and the invention (yes, invention) and preservation of a

certain key in dialogue. In which these things are done with the more art—in which with the greater air of nature—readers will differently judge. Boswell's is, indeed, a very special case, and almost a generic; but it is not only in Boswell, it is in every biography with any salt of life, it is in every history where events and men, rather than ideas, are presented—in Tacitus, in Carlyle, in Michelet, in Macaulay—that the novelist will find many of his own methods most conspicuously and adroitly handled. He will find besides that he, who is free—who has the right to invent or steal a missing incident, who has the right, more precious still, of wholesale omission—is frequently defeated, and, with all his advantages, leaves a less strong impression of reality and passion. Mr. James utters his mind with a becoming fervour on the sanctity of truth to the novelist; on a more careful examination truth will seem a word of very debateable propriety, not only for the labours of the novelist, but for those of the historian. No art—to use the daring phrase of Mr. James—can successfully 'compete with life'; and the art that does so is condemned to perish *montibus aviiis*. Life goes before us, infinite in complication; attended by the most various and surprising meteors; appealing at once to the eye, to the ear, to the mind—the seat of wonder, to the touch—so thrillingly delicate, and to the belly—so imperious when starved. It combines and employs in its manifestation the method and material, not of one art only, but of all the arts. Music is but an arbitrary trifling with a few of life's majestic chords; painting is but a shadow of its gorgeous pageantry of light and colour; literature does but drily indicate that wealth of incident, of moral obligation, of virtue, vice, action, rapture, and agony, with which it teems. To 'compete with life,' whose sun we cannot look upon, whose passions and diseases waste and slay us—to compete with the flavour of wine, the beauty of the dawn, the scorching of fire, the bitterness of death and separation—here is, indeed, a projected escalade of heaven; here are, indeed, labours for a Hercules in a dress coat, armed with a pen and a dictionary to depict the passions, armed with a tube of superior flake-white to paint the portrait of the insufferable sun. No art is true in this sense: none can 'compete with life': not even history, built indeed of indisputable facts, but these facts robbed of their vivacity and sting; so that even when we read of the sack of a city or the fall of an empire, we are surprised, and justly commend the author's talent, if our pulse be quickened. And mark, for a last differentia, that this quickening of the pulse

is, in almost every case, purely agreeable ; that these phantom reproductions of experience, even at their most acute, convey decided pleasure ; while experience itself, in the cockpit of life, can torture and slay.

What, then, is the object, what the method, of an art, and what the source of its power ? The whole secret is that no art does 'compete with life.' Man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality. The arts, like arithmetic and geometry, turn away their eyes from the gross, coloured, and mobile nature at our feet, and regard instead a certain figmentary abstraction. Geometry will tell us of a circle, a thing never seen in nature ; asked about a green circle or an iron circle, it lays its hand upon its mouth. So with the arts. Painting, ruefully comparing sunshine and flake-white, gives up truth of colour, as it had already given up relief and movement ; and instead of vying with nature, arranges a scheme of harmonious tints. Literature, above all in its most typical mood, the mood of narrative, similarly flees the direct challenge and pursues instead an independent and creative aim. So far as it imitates at all, it imitates not life but speech : not the facts of human destiny, but the emphasis and the suppressions with which the human actor tells of them. The real art that dealt with life directly was that of the first men who told their stories round the savage camp-fire. Our art is occupied, and bound to be occupied, not so much in making stories true as in making them typical ; not so much in capturing the lineaments of each fact, as in marshalling all of them towards a common end. For the welter of impressions, all forcible but all discrete, which life presents, it substitutes a certain artificial series of impressions, all indeed most feebly represented, but all aiming at the same effect, all eloquent of the same idea, all chiming together like consonant notes in music or like the graduated tints in a good picture. From all its chapters, from all its pages, from all its sentences, the well-written novel echoes and re-echoes its one creative and controlling thought ; to this must every incident and character contribute ; the style must have been pitched in unison with this ; and if there is anywhere a word that looks another way, the book would be stronger, clearer, and (I had almost said) fuller without it. Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt, and poignant ; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing, and emasculate. Life imposes by brute energy, like inarticulate thunder ; art

catches the ear, among the far louder noises of experience, like an air artificially made by a discrete musician. A proposition of geometry does not compete with life; and a proposition of geometry is a fair and luminous parallel for a work of art. Both are reasonable, both untrue to the crude fact; both inhere in nature, neither represents it. The novel which is a work of art exists, not by its resemblances to life, which are forced and material, as a shoe must still consist of leather, but by its immeasurable difference from life, which is designed and significant, and is both the method and the meaning of the work.

The life of man is not the subject of novels, but the inexhaustible magazine from which subjects are to be selected; the name of these is legion; and with each new subject—for here again I must differ by the whole width of heaven from Mr. James—the true artist will vary his method and change the point of attack. That which was in one case an excellence, will become a defect in another; what was the making of one book, will in the next be impertinent or dull. First each novel, and then each class of novels, exists by and for itself. I will take, for instance, three main classes, which are fairly distinct: first, the novel of adventure, which appeals to certain almost sensual and quite illogical tendencies in man; second, the novel of character, which appeals to our intellectual appreciation of man's foibles and mingled and inconstant motives; and third, the dramatic novel, which deals with the same stuff as the serious theatre, and appeals to our emotional nature and moral judgment.

And first for the novel of adventure. Mr. James refers, with singular generosity of praise, to a little book about a quest for hidden treasure; but he lets fall, by the way, some rather startling words. In this book he misses what he calls the 'immense luxury' of being able to quarrel with his author. The luxury, to most of us, is to lay by our judgment, to be submerged by the tale as by a billow, and only to awake, and begin to distinguish and find fault, when the piece is over and the volume laid aside. Still more remarkable is Mr. James's reason. He cannot criticise the author, as he goes, 'because,' says he, comparing it with another work, '*I have been a child, but I have never been on a quest for buried treasure.*' Here is, indeed, a wilful paradox; for if he has never been on a quest for buried treasure, it can be demonstrated that he has never been a child. There never was a child (unless Master James) but has hunted gold, and been a pirate, and a military commander, and a bandit of the mountains;

but has fought, and suffered shipwreck and prison, and imbrued its little hands in gore, and gallantly retrieved the lost battle, and triumphantly protected innocence and beauty. Elsewhere in his essay Mr. James has protested with excellent reason against too narrow a conception of experience; for the born artist, he contends, the 'faintest hints of life' are converted into revelations; and it will be found true, I believe, in a majority of cases, that the artist writes with more gusto and effect of those things which he has only wished to do, than of those which he has done. Desire is a wonderful telescope, and Pisgah the best observatory. Now, while it is true that neither Mr. James nor the author of the work in question has ever, in the fleshly sense, gone questing after gold, it is probable that both have ardently desired and fondly imagined the details of such a life in youthful day-dreams; and the author, counting upon that, and well aware (cunning and low-minded man!) that this class of interest, having been frequently treated, finds a readily accessible and beaten road to the sympathies of the reader, addressed himself throughout to the building up and circumstantiation of this boyish dream. Character to the boy is a sealed book; for him, a pirate is a beard in wide trousers and literally bristling with pistols. The author, for the sake of circumstantiation and because he was himself more or less grown up, admitted character, within certain limits, into his design; but only within certain limits. Had the same puppets figured in a scheme of another sort, they had been drawn to very different purpose; for in this elementary novel of adventure, the characters need to be presented with but one class of qualities—the warlike and formidable. So as they appear insidious in deceit and fatal in the combat, they have served their end. Danger is the matter with which this class of novel deals; fear, the passion with which it idly trifles; and the characters are portrayed only so far as they realise the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear. To add more traits, to be too clever, to start the hare of moral or intellectual interest while we are running the fox of material interest, is not to enrich but to stultify your tale. The stupid reader will only be offended, and the clever reader lose the scent.

The novel of character has this difference from all others: that it requires no coherency of plot, and for this reason, as in the case of 'Gil Blas,' it is sometimes called the novel of adventure. It turns on the humours of the persons represented; these are, to be sure, embodied in incidents, but the incidents themselves, being

tributary, need not march in a progression; and the characters may be statically shown. As they enter, so they may go out; they must be consistent, but they need not grow. Here Mr. James will recognise the note of much of his own work: he treats, for the most part, the statics of character, studying it at rest or only gently moved; and, with his usual delicate and just artistic instinct, he avoids those stronger passions which would deform the attitudes he loves to study, and change his sitters from the humourists of ordinary life to the brute forces and bare types of more emotional moments. In his recent 'Author of "Beltraffio,"' so just in conception, so nimble and neat in workmanship, strong passion is indeed employed; but observe that it is not displayed. Even in the heroine the working of the passion is suppressed; and the great struggle, the true tragedy, the *scène-à-faire*, passes unseen behind the panels of a locked door. The delectable invention of the young visitor is introduced, consciously or not, to this end: that Mr. James, true to his method, might avoid the scene of passion. I trust no reader will suppose me guilty of undervaluing this little masterpiece. I mean merely that it belongs to one marked class of novel, and that it would have been very differently conceived and treated had it belonged to that other marked class, of which I now proceed to speak.

I take pleasure in calling the dramatic novel by that name, because it enables me to point out by the way a strange and peculiarly English misconception. It is sometimes supposed that the drama consists of incident. It consists of passion, which gives the actor his opportunity; and that passion must progressively increase, or the actor, as the piece proceeded, would be unable to carry the audience from a lower to a higher pitch of interest and emotion. A good serious play must therefore be founded on one of the passionate *cruces* of life, where duty and inclination come nobly to the grapple; and the same is true of what I call, for that reason, the dramatic novel. I will instance a few worthy specimens, all of our own day and language: Meredith's 'Rhoda Fleming,' that wonderful and painful book, long out of print and hunted for at bookstalls like an Aldine; Hardy's 'Pair of Blue Eyes'; and two of Charles Reade's, 'Griffith Gaunt' and the 'Double Marriage,' originally called 'White Lies' and founded (by an accident quaintly favourable to my nomenclature) on a play by Maquet, the partner of the great Dumas. In this kind of novel the closed door of the

'Author of "Beltraffio"' must be broken open ; passion must appear upon the scene and utter its last word ; passion is the be-all and the end-all, the plot and the solution, the protagonist and the *deus ex machinâ* in one. The characters may come anyhow upon the stage : we do not care ; the point is, that, before they leave it, they shall become transfigured and raised out of themselves by passion. It may be part of the design to draw them with detail ; to depict a full-length character, and then behold it melt and change in the furnace of emotion. But there is no obligation of the sort ; nice portraiture is not required ; and we are content to accept mere abstract types, so they be strongly and sincerely moved. A novel of this class may be even great, and yet contain no individual figure ; it may be great, because it displays the workings of the perturbed heart and the impersonal utterance of passion ; and with an artist of the second class it is, indeed, even more likely to be great, when the issue has thus been narrowed and the whole force of the writer's mind directed to passion alone. Cleverness again, which has its fair field in the novel of character, is debarred all entry upon this more solemn theatre. A far-fetched motive, an ingenious evasion of the issue, a witty instead of a passionate turn, offend us like an insincerity. All should be plain, all straightforward to the end. Hence it is that, in 'Rhoda Fleming,' Mrs. Lovel raises such resentment in the reader ; her motives are too flimsy, her ways are too equivocal, for the weight and strength of her surroundings. Hence the hot indignation of the reader when Balzac, after having begun the 'Duchesse de Langeais' in terms of strong if somewhat swollen passion, cuts the knot by the derangement of the hero's clock. Such personages and incidents belong to the novel of character ; they are out of place in the high society of the passions ; when the passions are introduced in art at their full height, we look to see them, not baffled and impotently striving, as in life, but towering above circumstance and acting substitutes for fate.

And here I can imagine Mr. James, with his lucid sense, to intervene. To much of what I have said he would apparently demur ; in much he would, somewhat impatiently, acquiesce. It may be true ; but it is not what he desired to say or to hear said. He spoke of the finished picture and its worth when done ; I, of the brushes, the palette, and the north light. He uttered his views in the tone and for the ear of good society ; I, with the emphasis and technicalities of the obtrusive student. But the point, I may reply, is not merely to amuse the public, but to offer

helpful advice to the young writer. And the young writer will not so much be helped by genial pictures of what an art may aspire to at its highest, as by a true idea of what it must be on the lowest terms. The best that we can say to him is this: Let him choose a motive, whether of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of the motive and every property employed shall bear to it a near relation of congruity or contrast; avoid a sub-plot, unless, as sometimes in Shakespeare, the sub-plot be a reversion or complement of the main intrigue; suffer not his style to flag below the level of the argument; pitch the key of conversation, not with any thought of how men talk in parlours, but with a single eye to the degree of passion he may be called on to express; and allow neither himself in the narrative nor any character in the course of the dialogue, to utter one sentence that is not part and parcel of the business of the story or the discussion of the problem involved. Let him not regret if this shortens his book; it will be better so; for to add irrelevant matter is not to lengthen but to bury. Let him not mind if he miss a thousand qualities, so that he keeps unflaggingly in pursuit of the one he has chosen. Let him not care particularly if he miss the tone of conversation, the pungent material detail of the day's manners, the reproduction of the atmosphere and the environment. These elements are not essential: a novel may be excellent, and yet have none of them; a passion or a character is so much the better depicted as it rises clearer from material circumstance. In this age of the particular, let him remember the ages of the abstract, the great books of the past, the brave men that lived before Shakespeare and before Balzac. And as the root of the whole matter, let him bear in mind that his novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude; but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity. For although, in great men, working upon great motives, what we observe and admire is often their complexity, yet underneath appearances the truth remains unchanged: that simplification was their method, and that simplicity is their excellence.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

A Stormy Night.

A STORY OF THE DONEGAL COAST.

I.

A WILD west Coast, a little Town,
Where little Folk go up and down,
Tides flow and winds blow:
Night and Tempest, Ocean's rage,
Human Will and Human Fate:
What is little, what is great?
Let me sing of what I know.

II.

Bright-curving Moon! stealing timidly forth
On the footsteps of sunset, the west and the north
Are conspiring; a rumour of turmoil hath spread
From dusky Ben Gulban to dim Teelin Head,
Over which thou hast floated an hour; but descending
To find the Atlantic, thou leavest night lonely,
And vapours grown frantic are blackly upwending,
Like thoughts never spoken but shudder'd at only:
Harsh blast hurries past, heavy gloom hath dropt down
Like a night within night, over fields, over town,
And the empty sands and rocks of the bay
Stretching many a mile away.

III.

Ever the wind more fiercely blew.
Far and low the cormorant flew
Across the black and swelling surge
To roost on ledges of the crag
Where gray Kilbarron's wall, a rag
Of ancient pride, o'ertops the verge,

And, sprinkled with their frequent spray,
Watches the billows night and day.
'Twas spring-time now, but the mad weather
Mix'd all seasons up together.

IV.

Among those rocks, within a den
Of driftwood and old sails, Three Men
Kept watch by turn, their smould'ring log,
Scarlet heart of a pungent fog,
Hour by hour with sleepy light
Glimmering. All without this fold
Was darkness and the noise of night,
Where the wide waste of ocean roll'd
Thund'ring with savage crash, and air
In one tremendous torrent stream'd
Across the rocks, across the wold,
Across the murky world. It seem'd
There never could be daylight more.

V.

And who are these Three Watchers? Two,
Brown of face and big of thew,
Half fishermen, half sailors, know
The tides and currents of the Bay,
With all the winds that round it blow;
One wakes, one sleeps; rough men are they.
The third is REDMOND: there he lies,
With slumber on his dark-fringed eyes,
And yet an anxious frowning face,
Youthful but haggard. Sad his case
Who into Sleepland too must bear
The weary burden of his care.
Thy Father, Redmond, with his woes
And years, can better find repose.

VI.

His Father? let the humble strain
That tells of him be brief and plain.
Land-surveyor by his trade,
A modest living thus he made,

A STORMY NIGHT.

Being honest, frugal, diligent,
 (Such men not often fail) content
 With what he had, averse from strife,
 A good Man, with as good a Wife,
 And two fine Boys. Their schooling done,
 He strove to train the Elder Son
 To take his place; but, partly wrought
 By nature in him, partly caught
 From books and men, the Boy's desire
 Of roaming kept his blood on fire,
 Till Denis ran away to sea.
 Alas, poor Mother! woe for thee,
 Whose Son is not alive or dead.
 Daily, long time, she smooth'd his bed;
 Watch'd till the Postman shook his head
 In passing; when the nights were wild,
 Lay thinking of her firstborn Child,
 The small white head that used to rest
 So safely on her loving breast:
 Where is it now? Boys little know
 Of mothers' tears, how sad they flow.

VII.

Redmond, the old folk's Younger Son,
 And now a ten times precious one,
 Tall, active, gypsy-dark, well-featured,
 Ready of wit and kindly natured,
 Vain, though, and by his self-conceit
 Easier than any fool to cheat,
 Took to his Father's trade at first
 Alertly; but the Lad was cursed
 In his Companions; learnt to play
 At cards, and out at night to stay,
 And taste that fountain, unappall'd,
 'Water of Life'¹ most wrongly call'd;
 Far truer will he speak who saith
 'Water of Evil,' 'Water of Death.'
 The careful Father, growing old,
 Saw business slipping from his hold,

¹ *Uisge beatha*, usquebaugh, whisky; literally, water of life (eau de vie, aqua vitae).

Nor caught, as hope was, by the Son.
Leak of misfortune, once begun
Soon pour'd a flood ; and they were poor,
When want is hardest to endure,
That aged Toiler and his Wife.

VIII.

Young Redmond broke his idle life
With fitful enterprise ; of stills
Among the dark and lonely hills
He knew, and whereabouts to set
The salmon-poacher's cunning net.
By chance he saw and join'd for gain
To-night these rugged Fishers twain,
Who from the crags of that wild coast,
With angry daylight gone almost,
Had glimpsed a large deep-laden Brig,
A British vessel by her rig,
Hopelessly tacking, every tack
Nigher the rocks whenceon her back
Must soon be broken, and her masts
Flung down, and 'mid the shrieking blast's
Derision and the mad waves' hate
She and her crew must find their fate.
The coastguardmen were far away,
Busy elsewhere down the bay.

IX.

The Watchers know the wind and tide,
And in their chosen shelter bide ;
And Redmond sleeps amid the roar ;
Sleeps, but with many a moan and start,
Remorseful, weak, unhappy heart,—
A shake, a voice, 'The Brig's ashore !'
Then, sighing deep, he wakes, alone ;
His Comrades are already gone.
He lights his lantern, buttons tight
His coat, pulls down his cap aright,
And out,—but in a moment turns ;
His throat from evil custom yearns

A STORMY NIGHT.

For poison : 'Curse them ! have they hid
 The bottle ? '—eagerly he slid
 His hand, found, clutch'd it, deeply quaff'd
 With tremulous lips the burning draught,
 Then rush'd into the night and storm.

X.

Silent the signal-gun's alarm,
 And quench'd the sudden blue-light's glare ;
 But down among the breakers there
 A Black Bulk on their ghostly white
 Was dimly seen through the wild night,
 And shouts rose sometimes on the blast.
 Redmond crept downwards, reach'd at last
 'Mid flying foam a slant of rock
 Whose lower slope receives the shock
 And rush of billows. See ! the surge
 Hath left a Waif upon its verge,
 And Redmond seizes it,—a Man,
 Dead or alive ? 'Tis all he can
 To lift the drench'd and helpless form
 A short way up. Yes, he is warm,
 He lives, though doubtless badly hurt.
 But what is this, so tightly girt
 About his waist, heavy and full ?
 A leathern belt. In vain to pull !
 That stubborn buckle will not slip,
 Nor break to an impatient grip.

XI.

Stunn'd as he was, the Stranger felt
 Fingers tampering with his belt ;
 He clutch'd the Robber, strove to rise ;
 But Redmond, fastening on the prize,
 With ever-growing fury burn'd,
 As now, his strength in part return'd,
 The Man fought hard, and tried to shout.
 The words were blown back in his throat,
 And, stifled there by savage grasp,
 Died off into a groan, a gasp,

When dragg'd across the rocky ledge
He hung upon the perilous edge
Of a black rugged gulf, wherein,
Sweeping up its midnight cave,
Was heard the stroke of heavy wave
Amidst the elemental din.
With one fierce action Redmond tore
The belt away, and flung him o'er.

XII.

And in that moment pass'd a change
On Redmond's life ; the world grew strange.
He did not move or tremble or groan.
The Night and He were there alone.
Without a thought, without a plan,
He had robb'd and murder'd a man ;
Whither to go, or what to do,
Whom seek, or shun, he nothing knew ;
Nor whether it was calm or storm,
Nor whether he was cold or warm.
He crawl'd away ; he found the Tent ;
The place was empty, in he went,
Sat down bewilder'd. Half it seem'd
As though he had but slept and dream'd
This wretchedness, until he felt
His clammy fingers touch the Belt,
Which bit him worse than snake. He knew
That all the dreadful deed was true.

XIII.

A knife-slash ! Coins of glitt'ring gold
Across the sullen fire-shine roll'd,
The Dead Man's treasure ; also shone
A brass plate on the Belt, whereon
Was writing. Redmond stir'd the flame,
Stoop'd forward, read his Brother's name.
Springing to his feet upright
With one hoarse yell that tore the night
He flung the tent-sail open. There,
With bloody face and eyes a-stare,

A STORMY NIGHT.

Look'd in—his murder'd brother's Ghost.
 Redmond, he knew not whither, fled,
 To human gaze for ever lost.

XIV.

And yet, his Brother was not dead.
 He dropt upon a jutting shelf
 Over the raging ocean-gulf,
 Crept upwards, found the glimm'ring light.
 Thence his Murderer took flight
 Into the darkness. The cold wave
 Swallow'd him. No man made his grave.

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XV.

Redmond went forth at fall of night,
 Denis came back with morning light.
 Whitebeard Father, trembling Mother,
 Losing one Son to find another,
 Strange were your thoughts!—tho' age no more
 Wonders keenly as of yore.
 Denis had written home, to say
 That rich he would return some day,
 Or never; but the lines were lost.
 He sought the far Pacific Coast,
 Mined, struggled, starved, lay at death's door,
 Was three times rich and three times poor,
 Then triumph'd, hurried east, and found
 An Irish vessel homeward bound—
 Which bore him straighter than was good.
 So much the Parents understood.
 And often by the snug fireside
 Among the hills, far from the tide,
 Where Denis kept their old age warm,
 Curious strangers would they tell
 About 'the Night of the Big Storm;'
 Yet never till the day they died
 Knew how in truth it all befell.
 But Denis told his Wife; nor she,
 A pious soul, forgot the plea
 For Redmond when she bow'd her knee.

And Denis doth his duties right
In house and field ; tho' nothing can
Lift from the silent serious man
The shadow of that Stormy Night.

XVI.

The rain-clouds and storm-clouds roll up from the sea.
The sun and the morning disperse them : they flee.
The winds and the waves fall to silence. The blue
Overarches the world. There is plenty to do.
The Fisher rows forth, and the Seaman sets sail,
The Smith hits his iron, the Joiner his nail,
The red Ploughman plodding, the pale Tailor stitching,
The Clerk at his desk, and the Cook in her kitchen.
The poor little Folk in our poor little Town
On their poor little business go up and go down ;
Like people in London and Paris and Rome,
And elsewhere that live under crystalline dome.
And each by himself, whether little or great,
Fulfil his own life and endures his own fate.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

Sir Jocelyn's Cap.

I.

‘THIS,’ said Jocelyn, throwing himself into a chair, ‘is the most wonderful thing I ever came across.’

Do you know how, sometimes in the dead of night, or even in broad daylight, while you are thinking, you distinctly hear a voice which argues with you, puts the case another way, contradicts you, or even accuses you and calls names?

This happened to Jocelyn. A voice somewhere in the room, and not far from his ear, said clearly and distinctly, ‘There is something here much more wonderful.’ It was a low voice, yet metallic, and with a cluck in it as if the owner had begun life as a Hottentot.

Jocelyn started and looked around. He was quite alone. He was in chambers in Piccadilly: a suite of four rooms; outside there was the roll of carriages and cabs, with the trampling of many feet; at five o’clock in an afternoon in May, and in Piccadilly, one hardly expects anything supernatural. When something of the kind happens at this time, it is much more creepy than the same thing at midnight. The voice was perfectly distinct and audible. Jocelyn felt cold and trembled involuntarily, and then was angry with himself for trembling.

‘Much more wonderful,’ repeated this strange voice with the cluck. Jocelyn pretended not to hear it. He was quite as brave as most of his brother clerks in the Foreign Office, but in the matter of strange voices he was inexperienced, and thought to get rid of this one as one gets rid of an importunate beggar, by passing him without notice.

‘I’ve looked everywhere,’ he said.

‘Not everywhere,’ clucked the voice in correction.

‘Everywhere,’ he repeated, firmly. ‘And there’s nothing. The old man has left no money, no bank books, no sign of investment, stocks, or shares. What did he live upon?’

‘Me,’ said the voice.

Jocelyn started again. His nerves, he said to himself, must be getting shaky.

'He seems to have had no "affairs" of any kind; no solicitors, no engagements; nothing but the letting of the Grange. How on earth did he——' Here he stopped, for fear of being answered by that extraordinary echo in his ear. He heard a cluck-cluck as if the reply was ready, but was checked at the moment of utterance.

'All his bills paid regularly, nothing owing, not even a tailor's bill running, and the money in his desk exactly the amount and no more required for his funeral. Fancy leaving just enough for your funeral! Seems like a practical joke on your lawful heir. Nothing in the world except that old barn.' He sat down again and meditated.

The deceased was his uncle, the chief of the old house, the owner and possessor of the Grange. He left, it is true, a formal will behind him, in which he devised everything of which he was possessed to his nephew Jocelyn, who inherited the Grange and the park besides the title. Unfortunately, he did not specify his possessions, so that when the young man came to look into his inheritance, he knew not how great or how small it was. Now, when one knows nothing, one expects a great deal, which accounts for the buoyancy of human youth and the high spirits of the infant pig.

He began with an unsystematic yet anxious examination of the old man's desks and papers. They were left in very good order; the letters, none of which were of the least importance, were all folded, endorsed, and dated; the receipts—all for bills which would never be disputed—were pasted in books; the diaries, which contained the record of daily expenditure and the chronicle of small beer, stood before him in a long uniform row of black cloth volumes. Even the dinner cards were preserved, and the play-bills: a most methodical old gentleman. But this made it the more surprising that there could not be found among all these papers any which referred to his private affairs and his personal property.

'He must have placed,' said Jocelyn, 'all the documents concerning his invested moneys in the hands of some solicitor. I have only got to find his address.'

He then proceeded to examine slowly and methodically the drawers, shelves, cupboards, recesses, cabinets, boxes, cases, receptacles, trunks, and portmanteaus in the chambers, turning them

inside out and upside down, shaking them, banging them, peering and prying, carefully feeling the linings, lifting lids, sounding pockets, and trying locks, until he was quite satisfied that he had left no place untried. Yet he found nothing. This was surprising as well as disappointing. For although of late years old Sir Jocelyn's habits had been retired and even penurious, it was well known that in early manhood, that is to say, somewhere in the twenties and the thirties, he was about town in a very large and generous sense indeed. He must, at that time, have had a great deal of money. Had he lost it? Yet something must have remained. Else, how could he live? And at least there must be some record of the remnant. Yet, strange to say, not even a bank book. Jocelyn thought over this day by day. He had taken up his abode in the chambers, which were comfortable, though the furniture was old and shabby. The rent, which was high, was paid by the Grange, now let to a family of Americans of the same name, who wanted to say they had lived in an old English country house, and would go home and declare that it was the real original cradle of their race. Cradles of race, like family trees, can be ordered or hired of the cabinet maker, either in Wardour Street or the College of Heralds. The old man *must* have had something besides the family house. If it was only an annuity, there would be the papers to show it. Where were those papers?

This search among the drawers and shelves and desks took him several days. It was upon the second day that he heard the voice. On the fifth day, which was Saturday, he began with the books on the shelves—there were not many. First he looked behind them: nothing there; he remembered to have heard that sometimes wills, deeds, and other proofs of property have been hidden in the leaves of the Family Bible: there was no Family Bible, but there was a great quantity of novels, and Jocelyn spent a long afternoon turning over the leaves of these volumes in search of some paper which would give him a clue to his inheritance. He might just as well have spent it squaring the circle, or extracting the square root of minus one, or pursuing a metaphysical research, for all the good it did him. It is only fair to the young man that he would have greatly preferred spending the time in lawn-tennis, and especially in playing that game at a place which was adorned with the gracious presence of a certain young lady. 'A Foreign Office clerk,' said Jocelyn, bitterly; 'a mere Foreign Office clerk is good enough to dance with. She has danced with me for a year and a

half. The other fellow can't dance. But when that clerk becomes the owner of a tumble-down Grange, though there are not twenty acres of ground belonging to it, and, besides, gets all the property of old Sir Jocelyn, whom all the world knows, and inherits his title, that Foreign Office clerk becomes, if you please, a person of consideration, as the other fellows shall see. But where the devil is the property?'

'Property!' It was the same curious echo, in his ear, of that metallic clucking voice. Remember that it was Saturday afternoon when the streets are full; this made such a phenomenon as a voice proceeding from empty space all the more striking and terrible. Much more terrible was the thing which next occurred. You know how in thought reading the medium takes your hand, and without your guidance moves slowly, but certainly, in the direction of the spot where you have hidden the ring. The phenomenon has been witnessed by hundreds: it is a fact which cannot be disputed. What happened to Jocelyn was exactly of the same kind, and therefore not more surprising. An invisible force—call it not a hand—an invisible, impalpable, strange electrical force seized his hand with a kind of grasp. It was not a strong grasp: quite the contrary. The pressure was varying, flickering, inconstant, uncertain. At the very first manifestation and perception of it, Sir Jocelyn's knees knocked themselves together, his hair stood on end, his moustache went out of curl, and, to use a favourite and very feeling expression of the last century, his jaws stuck. By this feeble pressure or hand-grasp, the young man was pulled, or rather guided gently across the room to a table on which stood, with its doors open, a large Japanese cabinet. It was one of the things with two doors, behind which are two rows of drawers, and below the doors one large drawer. He had already examined every one of the drawers on the first day of the search, when he had opened and looked into all the desks, drawers, boxes, and cupboards in the chambers. He knew what was in the drawers—a collection of letters, chiefly from ladies, written to his uncle and preserved by him. Was it possible that he had overlooked something? He opened all the drawers, turned out their contents, and proceeded to examine every letter. This took him two or three hours, during the whole of which time he had an uncomfortable feeling as if his forefinger were being gently but steadily pulled. At last he threw down the last letter and allowed himself, just like a man who is blindfolded and yet finds a hidden object, allows himself to be led by the unconscious guide straight

to the place where it has been deposited. Guided by this unknown force, he found himself grasping the lowest drawer—the large one—which he had already pulled out. What did it mean? He turned it round: there was nothing remarkable about the drawer: an empty drawer cannot contain a secret. Surprising: his fingers seemed pulled about in all directions—what was it? By this time, the first natural terror was gone, but his pulse beat fast; he was excited; he was clearly on the eve of making some strange discovery.

He examined the drawer again, and more carefully. He could see nothing strange about it. Then he heard that curious voice again which seemed in his own head, and said 'Measure.'

What was he to measure? If Jocelyn had been a conjuror he would have understood at once: he would even have guessed: the professor of legerdemain is a master in all kinds of craft and subtlety—I knew one of them who, though passionately fond of whist, would never play the game on account of the temptation in dealing to give himself all the thirteen trumps—but above all he understood the value of drawers, compartments, divisions, and recesses which are shorter than they seem. The drawer was in fact only three-fourths the depth of the cabinet. When Jocelyn at length realised this fact, he perceived that there must be a secret compartment at the back, where no doubt something was hidden which it greatly concerned him to find out. Of course by this time he accepted without further doubt the fact that unusual forces—call them forces—were abroad. 'A psychic influence,' said Jocelyn, though his teeth chattered, 'of a rare and most curious description.' The communication of it to the Society established as a Refuge for the stories which nobody outside it will believe, would be very interesting: but perhaps it was his uncle who thus—here another impatient jerk of his finger startled him. He turned the cabinet round; the back presented a plain surface of wood without any possible scope for the operation of secret springs; the side was carved with little round knobs in relief. He measured the drawer with the side of the cabinet: there was a difference of three and a half inches, and the drawer was three inches high: as the cabinet was two feet broad, this gave a space of $3 \times 24 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, which represents 252 cubic inches. A good deal may be hidden away in 252 cubic inches. How was he to get at the contents? Any one can take a hammer and chisel and brutally burst open a cabinet, whether of Japanese or any other work. It did strike Jocelyn that perhaps with the poker he might prise the thing

open. But then, so beautiful a cabinet, and his late uncle's favourite depository for the love-letters of a life spent wholly in making love—'twould be barbarous. While he considered, the forefinger of his right hand was travelling slowly over the knobs. Presently it stopped, and Jocelyn felt upon the knuckle a distinct tap. He pressed the knob; to his astonishment a kind of door flew open. Jocelyn looked in—there *was* something! At this moment he paused. He did not doubt that the treasure, whatever it was, would prove of the greatest, the very greatest importance to him, perhaps title-deeds, perhaps debentures, perhaps notes of investments, perhaps the address of the solicitors in whose hands Sir Jocelyn, his uncle, had placed his affairs, perhaps—but here he tilted up the cabinet, not daring through some terror of the supernatural, as if a spirit who could bite might be lurking in the recess, to put in his hand, and the contents fell out without any apparent supernatural assistance, by the natural law of gravity. We may take it as a general rule in all occurrences of the supernatural kind, that the ordinary machinery provided by nature and already explained by Sir Isaac Newton and others, is employed wherever it is possible. In cases where direct interference of another kind is required, no doubt it is always forthcoming. No ghost or spirit would hesitate, of course, to go through closed doors, pass parcels through walls, and so forth; but if the doors are open the plain way is clearly and obviously the easiest and best. So that, if a thing will fall from a receptacle of its own accord when that receptacle is inverted, there is really no necessity at all for the assistance of psychic force. This explains why the parcel fell out.

It was wrapped in an old discoloured linen covering. Jocelyn unfolded it with trembling fingers. It contained a cap. Odd; only a cap. It was made of cloth, thick, such as is used for a fez, and formerly no doubt red, but the colour was almost gone out of it, and it was moth-eaten. In shape it was not unlike a Phrygian cap. Round the lower part there ran an edging, an inch broad, of gold embroidery, but this too was ragged and, in places, falling off. There was also a lining of silk, but it was so ragged and worn that it looked as if at a single touch it would fall out.

'A worn-out, old decrepit cap,' said Jocelyn. 'All this fuss about a worthless cap!'

Just then his little finger received a tap; and Jocelyn, his attention thus directed to the spot, saw a folded paper beneath the cap.

'Ah!' he cried, 'this is what I have been looking for. But a cap! I never heard my uncle talk about a cap.'

He took up the paper, and yet he could not choose but look at the cap itself. As he gazed upon it, he felt himself turning giddy. Cabinet, cap, and paper swam before his eyes. 'It is nothing,' he murmured, 'the heat of the room—the—the—'

'Effendi!' said the voice he knew, metallic and yet quavering. 'Excellency! It is—*me*—your servant.'

The cap was transformed—it was now of a brilliant hue, while its gold embroideries were fresh and glittering—it no longer lay upon a table, decrepit and falling to pieces, but it now covered the head of a little old man, apparently about eighty or more, so wrinkled and lined was his visage. He seemed feeble, and his knees and shoulders were bent, but his eyes were bright. He was dressed in some Oriental garb, the like of which Jocelyn had never seen.

He bowed, in Oriental style with gesture of the fingers. 'I am,' he said, 'the Slave of the Cap. I am a Jinn, and I am at his Excellency's service, night and day, to perform his wishes so long as he possesses the Cap.'

'And at what price?' asked Jocelyn.

'At none. The Effendi's ancestor paid the charges: fees are not allowed to be taken by assistants. Sorcerers and great Effendis like his Excellency are particularly requested to observe this rule.'

'Certainly,' said Jocelyn. 'If there is to be no signing of bonds and term of years—'

'Nothing, your Excellency, nothing of the kind.'

'In that case——' here the faintness came over him again and his eyes swam. When he recovered he looked about him for his Oriental servant. There was no one there, only the furniture in the room and the cabinet, and beside the cabinet the worn and faded cap.

'I think I must be going off my head,' said Jocelyn. 'I wish I had a glass of water.' As he spoke he saw that a glass of water actually stood on the table at his elbow. He took it and was going to drink it. 'Faugh!' he cried, setting it down hastily, 'it has had flowers in it.'

Then he remembered the roll of paper—which he opened. It was a letter on two sheets addressed to himself by his uncle, but the second sheet had been twisted, and apparently used as a light, for it was partly burned and had been rolled out again and

placed with the unburned sheet as if the writer had been hurried.

'My dear nephew,' it said, 'I have deferred until a late—perhaps the last moment, writing to you. I have long felt that you are ardently desirous of ascertaining what I have and what I should leave to you. In the first place, there is the Grange. You can always, I should think, let that very old and picturesque building for a sum which will give you the rent of your chambers, pay your club subscriptions and your dinners. You have, besides, your clerkship, which ought to pay your tailor's bill. I do not advise you as regards the conduct of your life. My own, it is true, has been chiefly guided by the precepts of the great and good Lord Chesterfield; but I refrain from pressing my example upon you.

'There is, however, a very curious family possession which I am able to leave you. I am sure you will value it highly, if only on account of its history. It has been in the possession of the chief of our race for five hundred and fifty years and more. Sir Jocelyn de Haultegresse, your ancestor, being one of the later Crusaders, under Richard Cœur de Lion, received it for some friendly services, the nature of which is unknown, from his noble and learned friend, the Saracen Sorcerer, Ali Ibn Yússûf, commonly called Khanjar ed Dîn, or the Ox Goad of Religion. This invaluable cap confers on its possessor the power of having whatever he wishes for. Armed with this talisman, and being all, like myself, men of moderate ambitions, anxious chiefly to get through life as pleasantly as possible, we have not incurred odium by amassing broad lands and great possessions. I bequeath, therefore, to you this cap in the hope that you will use it with moderation. Ponder carefully before expressing a desire, even in your own mind, the effect of making a wish which will be construed into an order. I must also give you a word of warning. I have observed for some time, to my great regret'—here the page was partly and irregularly burned—'to my very great regret . . . on many occasions to carry out my wishes promptly . . . desirable to exercise moderation . . . no excuse for other than prompt . . . not fall to pieces, or there may be alleged some pretext for crying off . . . ments have long been lost, and it might be difficult in court of law to remove . . . Well, my nephew, this talisman kept me in luxury for sixty years; perhaps it may yet . . . recover, so to speak, its old tone. At least I hope so. Your affect. . . .'

'By Jove!' said Jocelyn.

He might have gone on to ask if anybody had ever seen the like, or if one could have expected it, or if one was really living in an age when such things are discredited. But he did not. He only said 'By Jove!' and looked about the room, and at the cap, and at the letter, with bewildered eyes. At last he understood the meaning of this very plain letter. He pushed back his chair and sprang to his feet, crying, 'Christopher Columbus! I've got a WISHING CAP!'

II.

HE stood looking at the faded old cap; the thing fascinated him; the gold embroidery flickered, and seemed to send out sparks and tiny gleams of fire: the rusty stuff glowed and became ruddy again: *could* the thing be true? But his uncle was a sober man and a truthful: his narrative had nothing wild or enthusiastic about it.

'My ancestor, Sir Jocelyn de Haultegresse,' the young man repeated. 'Yes: the one who lies with crossed legs in the old church. I wish I knew how he got the cap.'

His eyes fell upon a picture. Why, he had seen that picture a hundred times, and never thought what it might mean, or if it had any meaning at all. It hung, among others, on the wall, and represented a Crusader in full armour conversing with a Moslem. The former was a young man; the latter was old, with a long grey beard, an old man who looked impossibly wise.

They were not only conversing, but Jocelyn heard what they were saying.

'I understand, Venerable Ox Goad of Religion,' said the Christian, 'that with this thing in my possession I can ask for and obtain anything I want.'

'Anything in reason,' replied Khanjar ed Din. 'You cannot, for instance, walk dry-shod from Palestine to Dover, but you can sail in safety through a storm.'

'And not be sea-sick?'

'Certainly not, if you command it.'

'Suppose, for instance—a valiant knight would not ask such a thing—but suppose, for illustration, one were to ask for—say the absence of the enemy when one lands, eh?—terror of the enemy at one's approach—flight of the enemy when one charges—safety when the arrows are rattling about one's armour—eh?'

'All these things,' replied the wise man, 'you can command and ensure.'

'Ha!' Sir Jocelyn smiled. 'It rejoices me,' he said 'piously, that I came a crusading. All Christendom—ay! and Islam too—shall ring with my prowess.'

'Certainly,' replied the Sage, 'if you wish it.'

'Can one also command the constancy of one's mistress?'

The magician hesitated.

'You can command it,' he said. 'But I know not the Frankish ladies. Perhaps they will not obey even the Slave of the Cap.'

'One more question,' said Sir Jocelyn. 'In my country they have a trick of burning those—even if they be knights, crusaders, and pious pilgrims—burning and roasting, I say, at slow fires those who become magicians, wizards, sorcerers, and those who employ the services of a devil.'

'Keep your secret,' said the wizard. 'Let no one know. And, that none may guess it, let your desires be moderate. Farewell, Sir Jocelyn.'

The conversation ceased, but the picture remained. Pictures, in fact, last longer than conversations.

'This is truly wonderful,' said Jocelyn.

He threw open the windows and looked into the street. Below him, in Piccadilly, was the crowd of the early London season: the carriages and cabs rolled along the road; on the other side the trees were in their early foliage. It seemed impossible, in the very heart and centre of modern civilisation and luxury, that such things as he had heard and witnessed should have happened. Yet, when he looked round the room again, there was the Cap, there was his uncle's letter, and there the picture of Sir Jocelyn's bargain. What had he given this Eastern wizard for a power so tremendous?

Then the young man began to reflect upon the history of his House. They had for generations lived in the ease and affluence of English country gentleness: they had never, so far as he knew, turned out a spendthrift: they had not fooled away their small estate: they had neither distinguished nor disgraced themselves: in fact, there was no reason why they should try to distinguish themselves: they had all they wanted, because they could command it. Knowledge? they had the royal road to it: art—skill—strength—they had only to wish for it. Wealth? they could command it. Why, then, should they seek to show themselves better, cleverer, stronger, or wiser than their fellows? It would have cost an infinity of trouble, and for no good end,

because if they succeeded how much better off would they have been? The knowledge of this secret made him understand his ancestors. As they had been, so should he be. Except for one thing. The four last baronets were unmarried; in each case the title descended to a nephew; as for himself—and here he murmured softly, ‘Eleanor’—and choked. Suppose you had set your heart wholly upon one thing: and that thing seemed impossible of attainment, so that the future loomed before you as dull and as grey as noontide at a foggy Christmas: and then suppose the clouds lifted, the sun shining, and that glorious, that beautiful Thing actually within your grasp. Any one, under these circumstances, would choke.

He returned to the table and contemplated the cap, wondering if the Attendant of the Cap were actually at his elbow.

‘It might be awkward,’ he said, ‘to wake at night and remember that the dev—I mean Monsieur the Jinn, the Minister of the Cap, was sitting beside one on the pillow. Would he come to church with one, I wonder? And would he be offended with remarks about him?’ He half expected some reply, but there was none.

‘He was a very old fellow to look at,’ he went on. ‘But in these cases age goes for nothing. I suppose he doesn’t know, himself, how old he is—as for the Cap, I wish it were a trifle less shabby.’

Wonderful to relate, a curious change came over the faded cloth: it looked bright again: and the gold embroidery smartened up; not to look fresh, but a good many years younger.

‘Sun came out,’ said Sir Jocelyn, trying not to be too credulous. Then he thought he would test the powers of the Cap, as mathematicians test a theory, namely, with elementary cases. ‘I wish,’ he said, ‘that my hat was new.’ Why, as he looked at his hat it suddenly struck him that it was not so very shabby after all: a mirror-like polish has a got-up look about it: this hat was one which had evidently been worn for a week or two, but was still quite good enough to be worn in the Park or anywhere.

‘My gloves’—he stopped because, without formulating the wish in words, he instantly became aware that his gloves were by no means so bad as they seemed a moment before. Not new certainly: but what is so horrid as a pair of brand-new gloves? He had overrated the faults of his gloves: they were an excellent pair of gloves, just worn long enough to make them fit the fingers and not make them look like glove-stretchers: the glove

should look made for the fingers, in fact, not the fingers for the glove. To be sure the gloves on the table were not those he had in his mind; and, in fact, he could not remember exactly how he came by those gloves. Later on, he discovered that he had taken the wrong pair at the Club.

He sat down to argue out this matter in his own mind. All young men try to do this: when they come to realise that 'arguing out' leads to hopeless fogging, they give it up. Very few middle-aged men argue out a thing; mathematicians, sometimes; logicians never: the intellectual ladies who contribute arguments on the intellect of the domestic cat to the *Spectator*, frequently. But the result is always more fog.

A Wishing Cap, at this enlightened period, is absurd.

But tables turn, furniture dances, men are 'levitated,' thought is read, and there is a Psychical Society, with Fellows of Trinity and Doctors of Letters at the head of it. Nothing, at any time, is absurd.

What evidence had he for the miraculous powers of the Cap?

First, the word of his Uncle, a most truthful and honourable gentleman. Next, the picture. Thirdly, the two remarkable Visions he had himself received. Fourthly, the gloves and the hat. Lastly, any further evidence the Cap itself might afford him.

By this time he was hopelessly fogged. He began to remember Will, Magnetic Force, Psychic fluid, and all the tags of the spiritualistic folk. These phrases are like spectres which come with fog and mist.

Sir Jocelyn was then sensible enough to perceive that he had argued the matter thoroughly out. After all, there is nothing like experiment, especially, as the conjurors say, under 'test conditions,' that is to say, where collusion, connivance, fraud, and deception of any kind are impossible. I have seen at a fair, under 'test conditions,' a plum-cake made in a gentleman's hat, and the hat none the worse.

He lit a cigarette and tried to think of other things unconnected with a Wishing Cap. And first he reflected that, although it is bad to be a penniless Foreign Office clerk, with no other recommendation than that of being heir to a Baronet reputed wealthy, it is worse to have succeeded to the title and to have discovered that there is no money after all. 'Hang it!' cried Jocelyn, 'there might have been something. I do wish my uncle had left me something—even a single sixpence!' As he spoke a small coin, a sixpence in fact, tumbled out of a forgotten

hole in his waistcoat pocket and fell clinking on the floor. At this point Jocelyn gave way to temper. 'Damn the waistcoat!' he cried, and at the same moment dropped his cigarette and burnt an irreclaimable hole in the light stuff of which the waistcoat was made.

Then he conceived a strange idea, a kind of trap to catch a demon, or at least to prove him. He leaned his elbows on the table and addressed the Cap.

'You are a poor old moth-eaten thing,' he said. 'That, so far as I know, you may have been when the Ox Goad of Religion gave you to my ancestor, Sir Jocelyn the Valiant. Now, you give me a test of your powers in a simple and unmistakable way. I am tired of the uniform London dinner. Cause me to have an entirely new dinner. There!' He expected some movement on the part of the Cap; a nod or inclination at least. Nothing of the kind. The Cap remained perfectly still.

'A note for you, sir,' said the servant, bringing him a letter.

It was from a man named Annesley, a friend of Jocelyn's, who had rooms in Sackville Street.

'If by any lucky chance,' it said, 'you are disengaged this evening, come here. The experiment in *menus* we have talked of comes off to-night. Courtland has been called away, so we must have it now or perhaps never.'

Yes: there had been talk about variety in *menus*. Annesley, a man of invention and ideas, had promised something, vaguely. Well, he would go: he answered the note to that effect.

'I suppose,' he said to the Cap, 'that you have got something to do with this. I wished for a new kind of dinner, and here is one: on the other hand, Annesley hasn't got a Cap, and I suppose he arranged his *menu* without reference to you. I will now give you another chance. I am going into the Park. I wish to meet the Stauntons. Do you know who the Stauntons are? Find out! Yah! You and your sixpence!'

In spite of his bluster, he was rapidly acquiring confidence in his Cap. Before going out, he carefully placed it, with his uncle's letter, in the secret drawer, which he closed. Then he looked at the picture of his ancestor and the Syrian magician.

'Venerable Ox Goad of Religion!' he said, imitating his great ancestor, 'can I command, in truth, all that I desire?'

It seemed as if a voice spoke in answer, but whose voice, or whence it came, he knew not.

‘Command!’

Jocelyn heard it and shuddered. Then he took his hat and gloves, and hurried forth.

III.

WHEN Jocelyn wished to meet the Stauntons, he should have explained that he wished to meet Nelly, or Eleanor, Staunton. This might have saved him a good deal of annoyance. For, first there were Connie Staunton, the actress, and her sister Linda, both of the Gaiety. He met them, driving in a victoria, and heard two young gentlemen, as they lifted their hats, murmur their names in accents of idolatrous emotion. ‘You are a fool,’ said Jocelyn, addressing the Cap. Then there came rolling along a great yellow chariot, with an old lady and still older gentleman in it. ‘That,’ said one of two girls who were standing beside the railing, ‘that is Lady Staunton and Sir George—our Hemmer is her lady’s maid. She’s a kind old thing.’

‘This is ridiculous,’ said Jocelyn. Yet he was pleased to observe the activity of his new servant. Two sets of Stauntons already, though not yet the right set. ‘I mean the Howard Stauntons.’

It was before him, slowly advancing with the throng. He could see the backs of two heads and the parasol of a third. Mrs. Staunton and Caroline and—yes—Nelly! Hers was the parasol. He would walk on and meet them when they turned.

He was conscious that he was regarded with no great favour by the young lady’s mamma. Still, he was now a Baronet, with a place in the country, and an income, counting his clerkship, of—Well, was it quite six hundred pounds a year? There was also the Cap, but of that he could say nothing. Yet oh! the joy of wishing beautiful dresses for Nelly, when Nelly should be his own!

There were two daughters: Caroline, the elder, was now seven-and-twenty years of age, and in her ninth season. As she was beautiful, accomplished, clever, and rich (by reason of a bequest from a rich uncle), it was to all women a most surprising thing that she did not marry. Men, who understand these things better, were not surprised. Her beauty was after the fine old Roman style, and accompanied by a more than classical coldness. She

was an advocate of woman's rights, an ardent politician, a student of logic, learned in many ways, but she was not, apparently, a devotee of Venus. That goddess loves her worshippers to be soft-eyed, smiling, caressing, lively, willing to be pleased and anxious to please. Caroline was chiefly anxious to be heard. There was also some talk about an early affair which ended badly. Some girls harden after such a disaster. Still, there was no doubt that Caroline desired to convert men into listeners. Of the opposite school was Nelly, younger than her sister by seven good solid years. Not so beautiful—in fact, with irregular features—she was singularly taking by reason, principally, of her sympathetic nature. She had no opinions at all of her own, but she was, on the other hand, very ready to hear those of other people, especially those of young men. That woman is certain to go far who thoroughly understands that young men—indeed, men of all ages—delight in nothing so much as to talk confidentially with women, and especially young women, about themselves. Many a most excellent chance has been lost through not observing and acting upon this principle. Nelly, her mother was resolved, should not be thrown away. As for Jocelyn, he had nothing, and she had nothing: therefore any little tenderness which might arise on the girl's side should be instantly nipped in the bud. A resolute mother, when assisted by an elder daughter, is altogether too powerful for a detrimental. Therefore Jocelyn got next to no chances, and worshipped at a distance and sadly. Whether Nelly ever understood the meaning of his melancholy I know not. Meantime, the young man lost no opportunity of meeting the object of his hopeless passion, though he too often fell into the hands of the elder sister, who made him sit down and hear her opinions. Now, however, he repeated, he was a Baronet, and he had—he had a Wishing Cap.

‘I wish they would go slower,’ he said. There was a block at Prince's Gate, and the whole line was stopped.

‘Thank you,’ said Jocelyn. In another moment he would have reached the carriage, when—oh!—he groaned deeply—as there met him the greatest bore of his acquaintance, a long-winded bore, a cheerful bore, a bore who laughs, a bore who tells very pointless stories, a bore at the sight of whom men fly, plead engagements, and for their sake break up clubs. This creature seized Jocelyn by the button, and told him how he had landed a good thing. And the block was removed and the carriages went on again. At last he broke away, keeping, still keeping the

Stauntons in sight. But there was another diversion. This time it was a slight carriage accident, but as it happened to friends of his own he could not in common decency pass on without tendering his assistance. Once more he got away, and saw the Stauntons' carriage slowly making its way to the turning at Albert Gate. Then was his last chance; the crowd was thick, but he forced his way through, and was prepared with a ready smile just before the carriage turned homewards. In fact, he had already executed a beautiful bow before he perceived that the vehicle was empty. The ladies had got out without his seeing them. He turned, discomfited, and went home to dress for dinner.

While dressing, in a pretty bad temper, he began to 'argue it out' again. Why, after all, he had got his wishes in the most remarkable manner. About the reality of his power there could be no doubt. He had wished for water: it was at his elbow: no doubt, if he had said drinking water, the Cap would not have brought water in which flowers had been standing for a week: he had wished for a new hat, and his hat suddenly blossomed into such glossiness as is acquired by a *coup de fer* at the batter's: for new gloves, and his gloves became—not new certainly, but newish; he had foolishly wished that his uncle had left him the smallest coin, and there was a sixpence: he had wished for a new and original dinner, and there had come Annesley's invitation: he had wished to see the Stauntons, and he had seen them.

It was with a feeling of great elation that he went to the dinner. Anybody would feel elated at the acquisition of such a strange and wonderful power.

'You shall have,' said Annesley, as if he had actually heard Jocelyn's wish, 'you shall have something perfectly new and original for dinner. It is an experiment which will, I think, please you.'

The table was laid with the exquisite attractiveness and skill which belonged to all of Annesley's entertainments. He was a young man who had ideas and a considerable fortune to carry them out with. Life is only really interesting when one has both ideas and a fortune. As for Courtland, he was a critic. Not a failure in art and letters, but a critic born; one of the men who are critics of everything, from a picture to a slice of bread and cheese, and from Château-Lafitte to bitter beer.

'I see,' said Annesley, with a gratified smile, 'I see, my dear fellow, that you are surprised at seeing oysters. It is not the

season for oysters, certainly,' yet there were six on each man's plate. 'But these are Chinese sun-dried oysters. They came to me by a singular chance, in a state resembling shrivelled rags. You put them into salt water for an hour or two, and then, as you observe, they turn out as plump and as fresh as natives. By the Chinese they are esteemed a great delicacy.'

Jocelyn tasted one, though with misgiving. Probably he did not share the Chinese opinion of sun-dried oysters, for he turned pale, gasped, and hastily drank a glass of chablis. The other man, observing the effect of the sun-dried oysters upon Jocelyn, prudently abstained from tasting them at all, but began a stream of conversation, under cover of which the oysters got carried away, while Annesley's delight in his experiment prevented him from observing its failure. Indeed, he went on to talk with complacent assurance of the foolish and ignorant prejudices with which many admirable forms of food are regarded.

'I shall proceed,' he said, 'to give you presently a remarkable illustration of this.' Jocelyn shuddered. 'Meantime here is a soup which I can highly recommend; it is a *purée* of cuttle-fish.'

It really was an excellent soup could Jocelyn have rid himself of the horrible imagination of a *poulpe* flinging hideous gelatinous arms about from the middle of the plate, and fixing its suckers on the hand that grasped the spoon.

'The cuttle-fish,' said Annesley, who, besides being a man of ideas, was also somewhat of a prig, 'the cuttle-fish, which is the actual type of the legendary Kraken—though, by the way, the Kraken is not so very legendary, since the great Squid—'

'That will do, Annesley,' said Courtland. 'We know all about the Squid. Fellow wrote a book about him. Model at the Fisheries.'

'The cuttle-fish,' continued Annesley, 'is a much maligned creature. Not more so, however, than the fish which Williams is now putting on the table—the dog-fish.'

'Oh! I say!' cried Jocelyn.

'Dog-fish,' said Courtland. 'Beasts when alive. Take all your bait. Fishermen roll 'em up and scrub the gunwale with 'em. Think it will encourage the others.'

'My pet fisherman,' said Jocelyn, 'used to do that till I begged him not to. He told me, I remember, that some people eat them.'

'Did he eat them himself?' asked Courtland.

'No, he did not.'

'Cooked like this,' interrupted Annesley, with a reassuring smile, 'he would have eaten them with enthusiasm. They are stuffed with canned shrimps.'

'Lead poisoning,' Courtland murmured in his beard.

The two guests, however, struggled manfully with the dogfish. With it, Annesley insisted, must be taken Catalan wine. Little was done with either. Nor was the next course, which consisted of iced potatoes with mulled Moselle, much more successful. It was one of Annesley's whims to find for each course its one peculiar drink: thus with the edible fungus he gave iced negus, and though he provided a sufficiency of dry champagne, he begged his guests so pathetically to try his fancies that they could not refuse. Long before the unnatural dinner came to an end, all three were excited by the mixture of drinks and the correspondingly small supply of food. By the time when the curried kingfishers—a rare and *recherché* dish—arrived, they were tired of talking about *cuisine*, and were arguing hotly, especially Courtland and Annesley, about things of which they knew nothing, as the proper method of riding a steeple-chase, a thing which none of them had ever tried, the locality of 'Swells' Corner' at Eton—all three had been at Harrow—and so forth. At last, Jocelyn, weary of the babble, and perhaps more than a little cross with the terrible failure of the dinner, cried out, 'Oh, don't let us wrangle in this way! I wish we had a little harmony!'

He had hardly spoken when a German band, brazen beyond all belief, broke out at the end of Sackville Street, and a piano-organ below their window.

'This is the work'—Jocelyn banged his fist upon the table—'of my ancestor's amazing fool of a devil!'

The others stopped and looked at him. They only half heard the words, but Jocelyn hastily fled.

Everything had gone wrong—the dinner more than anything else. A terrible thought struck him. Could his devil by any chance have gone stupid, or was he inattentive? And, if the latter, how to correct him? Suppose, for instance, Ariel had refused to obey Prospero, and his master had no spells to compel obedience! Now this seemed exactly Jocelyn's case. He sat down and took a cigar. 'The dinner,' he said, 'was the most infernal mess ever set before a man. I've taken too much wine, and mixed it; and I've eaten next to nothing. To-morrow morn-

ing I shall have a very self-assertive head; and all through that fool of a Cap.' He remembered, however, that he had as yet asked nothing serious of the Cap, and went to bed hopeful.

IV.

PERHAPS the wine he had taken made Jocelyn sleep, in spite of the many and exciting adventures of the day, without thinking of the Cap, or being disturbed by the thought of the invisible servant who sat beside his pillow. In the morning, which happened to be Sunday, he did think of the Cap when he awoke, but with a sleepy comfortable satisfaction in having got what promised to be a good thing. It was eight o'clock. 'Too early to get up,' he said; 'wish I could go to sleep again.'

His eyes instantly closed. When he awoke again it was eleven, and he proceeded to get up. It would be wrong to say that he did not think about the Cap; in fact, his mind was brimful of it, but Jocelyn was not one of those who work themselves up to an agony point of nervousness because they cannot understand a thing. On the contrary, once having realised that the thing *was*—an unmistakable and undeniable fact—he was ready to accept it, a thing as difficult to understand as the law of attraction.

'Heigho!' he said, 'I wish I was dressed.'

He then perceived that he had already put on his socks, though he couldn't remember having done so. And, besides, you cannot tub in your socks, so he had to take them off again. He wished for nothing more while he was dressing except once, and that at a most unlucky moment. It was in the process of shaving. He was thinking of the battles round Suakim, and his young heart, like that of his crusading ancestor, glowed within him. 'I wish,' he said, with enthusiasm, 'that I had a chance of shedding my blood for my country.' He forgot that his razor was at that moment executing its functions upon his chin; there was an awful gash—and an interval of ten minutes for temper and court-plaister.

He then began to comprehend that, with an attendant ready to carry out every wish, it is as well not to wish for things that you do not want. But no one knows, save those who have had a similar experience, how many things are wished for, carelessly and without thought. Jocelyn had to learn the lesson of prudence by many more accidents.

When his landlady, for instance, brought him his breakfast, she began, being a garrulous old creature, to talk about old Sir Jocelyn, and the flight of time and what she remembered, and presently mentioned, casually, that it was her birthday.

'Indeed!' said Jocelyn, with effusion, 'then, Mrs. Watts, I wish you many happy returns of the day and all such anniversaries.'

He accompanied the wish with a substantial gift, but was hardly prepared, when the good woman's daughter came up to clear away, to hear that it was also the anniversary of her wedding-day. In fact, in a short time the housekeeper's anniversaries rained, and all of them demanded recognition. Like the clerk who accounted for absence three times in one year by the funeral of his mother, so this good lady multiplied her own birthdays and those of her children as long as their announcement drew half-a-crown from her lodger. After breakfast Jocelyn prepared to sally forth. He could not find his umbrella. 'Devil take the thing!' he cried impatiently. It is to the credit of the Cap that the umbrella has never since been found. Therefore the wish was granted, and the devil did take the umbrella. Jocelyn *says* that he must have left it at the Club, but he *knows* otherwise.

He knew the church where the Stauntons had sittings, and he proposed to meet them as they came out and to walk in the gardens with them, perhaps to have luncheon with them. Nelly would be there, he knew, in the sweetest of early summer costumes, an ethereal creature made up of smiles, bright eyes, flowers, and airy colour. She would smile upon him, but then, hang it! she would smile upon another fellow just as sweetly. Would the time come, he thought, when she would promise to smile on no one but himself? Could one ever grow tired of her smiles? Caroline would be there, too, much more beautifully dressed, cold, superior, and ready to lecture. Fancy marrying Caroline! But as for Nelly—'Oh!' he sighed, thinking of his empty lockers, 'I do wish I had some money!'

He instantly felt something hard in his pocket. It was a shabby old leather purse full of money. He took out the contents and counted the money. Three pounds, fourteen shillings, ninepence and a farthing in coppers. Jocelyn sat down, bewildered.

'It's the Cap!' he said. 'I wished for money. The fool of a Cap brings me three pounds, fourteen shillings, and ninepence-farthing!' He threw the purse into the fire-place. 'What can you

do with three pounds, fourteen and ninepence-farthing? It would not do much more than buy a bonnet for Nelly.'

Yet, he remembered it *was* money. If he could get, any time he wished, just such a sum, he could get on. Almost mechanically he made a little calculation. Three pounds fourteen shillings and ninepence-farthing every half-hour, or say only ten times a day, comes to thirty-seven pounds seven shillings and eightpence-halfpenny. That, multiplied by three hundred and sixty-five, comes to 13,477*l.* 8*s.* 10½*d.* 'It is,' said Jocelyn, 'a very respectable income.'

He hesitated, being in fact a little afraid of testing his new power. Then he said, boldly, 'I want more money.'

There was a click among the coins on the table. Jocelyn counted them again. He found another sixpence and a half-penny more than he had at first observed.

'The Cap,' he said, 'is a fool.'

He remembered the advice given by the Ox Goad of Religion to the first Sir Jocelyn to exercise moderation. The reason for that advice, however, existed no longer. He would not now be burnt if all the bishops and clergy of the Established Church knew to a man that he had such a Cap. On the contrary it would be regarded as a very interesting fact and useful for religion in many ways. He must try, however, he said, to instruct his servant in larger ideas. No doubt, in the latter days of his uncle, the tendency to moderate, or even penurious ways had been suffered to grow and to develop. It must be checked. Money must be had, and in amounts worth naming. Three pounds odd! and then sixpence-halfpenny!

He met his friends coming out of church. Nelly, as he expected, as sweet as a rose in June; Caroline, perhaps, more resembling a full-blown dahlia. He walked through the Park to their house in Craven Gardens; Nelly, however, walked with her mother and Annesley, who also happened to be on the spot, while he walked with Caroline, who developed at some length the newest ideas in natural selection. He was asked to luncheon and sat beside Caroline, who continued her discourse, while Nelly and Annesley were talking all kinds of delightful and frivolous things. After luncheon Caroline said that as Sir Jocelyn took so much interest in these things, she would show him some papers on the subject which contained her ideas. She did, and the afternoon passed like a bad dream, with the vision of an unattainable Nelly at the other end of the room, as a mirage in the desert shows

springs and wells to the thirsty traveller. He might have wished, but he was afraid. He could not trust his Cap; something horrible might be done; something stupid would certainly be done. The servant might be zealous, but as yet he had not shown that he was intelligent.

He came away melancholy.

'My dear,' said Mrs. Staunton to Caroline, when he had gone, 'Sir Jocelyn seems to improve. He is quiet and—well—amenable, I should say. He comes of a good family, and his title is as old as a baronetcy can be. There is, I know, a place in the country, but I am told there is no money. The last baronet spent it all.'

Caroline reflected.

'If a woman must marry,' she said, 'and, perhaps, as things are, it is better that she should for her own independence, a docile husband with a good social position—— But perhaps he is not thinking of such a thing at all.'

'My dear, he comes here constantly. It is not for Nelly, who cannot afford to marry a poor man. Therefore——'

She was silent, and Caroline made no reply. There comes a time even to the coldest of women, when the married condition appears desirable in some respects. She had not always been the coldest of women, and now the thought of a possible wooer brought back to her mind that memory of a former lover in the days when she, alas! was as poor as her sister Nelly. A warm flush came upon her cheek and her eye softened as she thought of the brave boy who loved her when she was eighteen and he one-and-twenty; and how they had to part. He was gone. But things might have been so different.

'I shall meet them again on Wednesday,' Sir Jocelyn thought. 'They are going to Lady Hambledon's. If that Cap of mine has any power at all, it shall be brought into use on that evening. I must have—let me see—first of all, opportunity of speaking to her; next, I suppose, I can ask for eloquence or persuasive power—the opportunity must not be thrown away. And she must be well-disposed—do you hear?' he addressed the invisible servant. 'No fooling on Wednesday, or——' He left the consequences to the imagination of his menial, perhaps because he did not himself quite see his way to producing any consequences. What are you to do, in fact, with an invisible, impalpable servant, the laws of whose being you know not, whom you cannot kick, or discharge, or cut down in wages, or anything?

In the evening a thing happened which helped to confirm him in the reality of his Cap, and at the same time made him distrustful of himself as well as of his slave.

It was rather late, in fact about twelve o'clock. Jocelyn was walking quietly home from the Club along the safest thoroughfare in Europe—at least the chief of the Criminal Investigation Department said so. They used to call it the Detective Department, but changed the name because nothing was ever detected, and the term investigation does not imply the arrival at any practical result. There were still a few passengers in the street. One of them, a shambling, miserable-looking creature, besought alms of Jocelyn, who gave him something, and then fell a moralising on the mysteries of the criminal and pauper class in London. 'That man,' he said to himself, 'is, I suppose, a vagrant, a person without any visible means of existence. Fill him with beef and beer, or gin, and he will become pot-valiant enough to think of obtaining more of such things by force or fraud instead of by begging. Then he will become one of the dangerous class. Poor beggar! I wish I could do something to help one of these poor wretches.' Immediately afterwards he heard the sound of personal altercation. Two men, both in overcoats and evening dress, were struggling together, and one of them raised the cry of 'Police!' Then there was the sound of a well-planted blow, and one of the men broke away and ran as hard as he could towards Jocelyn. The other man, knocked for the moment out of time, quickly gathered himself together and ran in pursuit. Jocelyn, by instinct, tried to stop the first man, who, by a dexterous trip-up with his foot, flung him straight into the arms of the second, his pursuer. He, somewhat groggy with the blow he had received, collared Jocelyn and rolled over with him.

'I give him in charge,' he cried, as a policeman came up. 'I give him in charge—robbery with violence.'

'But, my dear sir,' explained Jocelyn, 'it is a mistake. You have got the wrong man.'

'Dessay,' said the policeman. 'You can explain that little matter at the station, where you are a going to.'

'Little matter?' repeated the man who had been robbed. 'You call it a little matter to be robbed of watch and chain in Piccadilly by a fellow who asks you for a light to his cigar, and then plants as neat a lefthander between your eyes as you can——'

'Why!' cried Jocelyn. 'It's Annesley!'

It was.

'Well,' said the policeman, when he understood, and ceased to suspect; 'as for him, he's got safe enough off, this journey. And as for you, sir,' he addressed Jocelyn, 'you couldn't have done a better turn to that fellow—I know who he is—than to let him chuck you into the other gentleman's arms.'

Again Jocelyn had obtained the wish of his heart. He had, thanks to the Cap, done something to help one of 'these poor wretches.'

(To be concluded.)

The Last Cast.

(AN ANGLER'S APOLOGY.)

ONE more last cast! How many a year
Beside how many a pool and stream,
Beneath the falling leaves and sere,
I've sighed, reeled up, and dreamed my dream!

Dreamed of the singing showers that break
And smite the lochs, or near or far,
And rouse the trout, and stir 'the take'
In Urigil or Lochinvar!

Dreamed of the soft propitious sky
O'er Ari Innes brooding grey,—
The sea trout, rushing at the fly,
Breaks the black wave in sudden spray!

.

Brief are man's days at best, perchance
I waste my own, who have not seen
The castled palaces of France
Shine in the Loire in summer green.

And clear and fleet Eurotas still,
You tell me, laves his reedy shore,
And flows beneath his fabled hill
Where Dian drove the chase of yore:

And 'like a horse unbroken' yet
The yellow stream, with fret and foam,
By bridge, and tower, and parapet,
Girdles his ancient mistress, Rome!

I may not see them, but I doubt,
If seen, I'd find them half so fair
As ripples of the rising trout
Beneath the budding elms of Yair.

Nay, spring I'd meet by Tweed or Ail,
And summer by Loch Assynt's deep,
And autumn in that lonely vale
Where wedded Avons seaward sweep.

Or where amid the empty fields,
Among the bracken of the glen,
Her yellow wreath October yields
To crown the crystal brows of Ken.

Unseen, Eurotas, eastward steal;
Unknown, Alpheus, westward glide;
You never heard the ringing reel,
The music of the water side!

Though gods have walked your woods among,
Though nymphs have fled your banks along,
You speak not that familiar tongue
Tweed murmurs like my cradle song!

ANDREW LANG.

In a Balloon.

UNTIL I tried a balloon I had no idea of what travelling was. Travelling, I mean, such as we meet with in the 'Arabian Nights'—transference from place to place without any sense of motion, as in a dream, or on what people are pleased to call the wings of imagination. When I first got into the wicker basket, and found only a few osier twigs, as my companion observed, between us and eternity, I felt inclined to close my eyes. I did so.

I did not realise the exact moment when I left everything upon earth behind me. I thought the car was still resting on *terra firma*.

'Where are we?' said I, opening my eyes.

'A thousand feet up,' said the aeronaut, 'rising rapidly.'

In a few more minutes we had reached an elevation of at least 4,000 feet, but still no sense of motion, not so much as in an hotel lift.

So much for ascension. Now for progression. You may travel in a balloon from six to sixty, or even eighty miles an hour—in fact, just according to the force of the wind—but you will feel no wind unless the balloon is captive; then you will be blown to pieces, as the captive balloon at Chelsea very nearly was one day, when happily no one was in it.

England is not the best place for pleasure ascents. In an hour, from whatever point you start, you may find yourself over the sea. To avoid this, you may have to make a terrific descent of four miles in less than as many minutes, as Mr. Glaisher actually did upon one occasion. Under these circumstances, the only advice I can give is what I adopted myself in a far less rapid descent—'Leave the car and cling to the ropes.' I should not recommend anyone without strong arms to go up in a balloon. You can never tell how soon they may be required; though I adhere to what I have elsewhere stated—on a fine day, with little wind and a skilled aeronaut, the risk of an ascent is infinitesimally small.

In the Pyrenees I saw a large fire balloon sent up on the old-

fashioned plan. It was made of brown paper, and stood about fifteen feet high. They lighted a fire of straw beneath it, and when it was full of hot smoke it ascended to an immense height, and came down in about ten minutes. No one was in it, it was not large enough for that; but in 1783, Mongolfier, the paper-maker of Annonay, made the first ascent in a similar balloon, only made of linen, and measuring 105 yards round. He went up one and a half miles.

From that day the problem 'how to ascend by means of an ascending vapour' was solved. It is astonishing that we seem to have made so little progress since. There is no balloon service anywhere established, although aeronauts assure us that the air-currents are tolerably fixed, and might be mapped out and utilised. Science has profited little by ballooning, because so few scientific men will go up. M. Gambetta, indeed, escaped from Paris in a balloon, but only because he could not get out in any other way. Military balloons have done little for war, and those sent out to Egypt were, I believe, not even unpacked. The balloon remains a kind of toy for Bank holidays. The progress it has made since Mongolfier's time, exactly a hundred years ago, is soon traced.

Late in 1783 M. Charles improved on Mongolfier's method of inflation—using hydrogen gas instead of straw smoke. He went up alone to an unknown height, passing rapidly, as it were, from spring to winter. In twenty minutes the earth had completely disappeared. The sun had long set, but as the aeronaut rose he came upon him again, and saw him set twice in one day. The Duke de Chartres rode twenty miles, and caught M. Charles in his descent; and the king, by the advice of two fashionable prelates, had him arrested, on his return to Paris, as a lunatic bent upon endangering the lives of His Majesty's subjects. However, after sending up sheep, cocks, and ducks, all of whom descended safely, ballooning soon became the rage in France, and François Pilatre de Rozier, of fateful memory, in his silk balloon continued to reach very high elevations, until he was finally dashed to pieces on the Channel coast.

It is not generally known that as early as 1785 Blanchard and Jeffries crossed the Channel in a hydrogen balloon. The feat is by no means a difficult one. Mr. Lithgoe, the aeronaut, assured me that any one could cross the Channel if he adopted the simple method which he thus described: 'Ascend about 10,000 feet, where you will find something like a constant current always

blowing across. Keep well up above the clouds, and according to the pace at which you are travelling, descend when you think you are again over *terra firma*.'

In 1821 the famous English aeronaut Green, whom I saw ascend from the Brighton Cricket Ground nearly thirty years ago, used coal gas for the first time; nor has the construction or general method of ballooning made any great way since his day.

The science is in its infancy. The balloon is still simple and primitive to a degree. A bag of silk, a valve opened by a cord, a network of rope, a few ballast bags, some cubic feet of gas, a wicker basket and an anchor, and '*le ballon, le voilà* !'

Every attempt to steer it in the presence of wind, mechanically, has failed; it cannot even be prevented from turning round and round, to the great confusion of scientific observers. No device for carrying additional ascensive power, such as the early fire balloonists adopted by taking up fuel with them, has yet been hit upon for the gas balloon; no plan has been found to check the constant leakage of gas in addition to the valve being always open.

There remains but one way of steering a balloon, and that is by observing the air currents.

I will illustrate this from my own experience. I ascended in the summer of 1884 with Mr. Wright, the aeronaut, about nine miles from London. About 2,000 feet up a gentle current wafted us in the direction of the Thames. We had no desire to come down in the Thames. On either side of the Thames lay the whole of London. We had too little wind to carry us over London, and too little gas to keep us hanging above it all night. We could not well come down on the chimney-pots; so we threw out ballast and shot up 1,000 feet, and thus struck a current which carried us out over Kent. By regulating gas valve for descent and ballast for ascent we kept in that current till we came over a nice park, when we dropped 4,000 feet and alighted.

If you are not satisfied with your current, as long as you have gas and ballast you can rise and fall till you get what you want. This was possible in 1785, and this is possible in 1885. It was possible to cross the Channel then, and it is possible to cross the Channel now. People went up then till they froze, and they go up now till they freeze. We have made a few longer journeys, and we have lost a few more lives. We have made a few more experiments with the atmosphere, and have confirmed some results inferred from similar experiments on high mountains, but hitherto the balloon has been a disappointment, both to those

who anticipated a revolution in meteorological research as well as to those who hoped to travel no more by land or water. Even as a surveying machine the balloon has broken down, and utterly failed to supersede the old methods.

When the great Lavoisier lectured before the Academy of Sciences at Paris on the balloon ascents of 1783 and 1785, he stopped short in the middle of his eloquent address, apparently overcome with the multitude of problems which the newly discovered air-machine seemed likely to solve. At the expiration of one hundred years we are still waiting, and are likely to wait, for the realisation of his hopes.

Until the Government or the public subscribe more liberally, and scientific men are willing to ascend more frequently, and the most constant air currents, at least, are mapped out as systematically as the currents of the ocean, the tides, and the trade winds, no serious progress is likely to be made in ballooning.

The cause of delay is obvious. But few scientific experts are willing to ascend. A panic seizes most people at the very thought of entering the wicker basket of a balloon. They would as soon step into Mr. Seymour Haden's wicker coffin at once. The ancients felt like this about the sea, and people in more recent times have had just the same feeling about railway travelling, until it was conclusively shown by statistics that it was far safer than travelling by stage-coach.

It would not be difficult to show the safety of balloon travelling by an appeal to facts such as these. The veteran Green made 526 ascents, and died in his bed. In the early days of reckless daring and ignorance, in 471 ascents there were but nine lives lost; and I need hardly remind my readers that during the last thirty years not one single accident has ever happened at the Crystal Palace balloon ascents. I wish I could say as much for the safety of Oxford Street or the River Thames.

I do not pretend that ballooning is free from all danger—it would be absurd to maintain that—but I do say, and I believe I shall be borne out by all skilled aeronauts, that most of these dangers arise from well-known specific causes, and they may easily be avoided.

If you go up with an unskilled aeronaut; if you will not obey orders, and are yourself ignorant of the first ballooning conditions; if you are constitutionally unfit from weak heart or head, or more than average inactivity; if you will go up on very windy days, or without proper precautions as to direction of wind, supply of gas,

or ballast; if you will dare very high ascents; last, but not least, if you will go up in a leaky or worn balloon—in all such cases accidents are liable to occur, nor can I recall a single one not due to one or more of these perfectly preventible causes.

By far the most appalling accident, next to falling into the sea, is the bursting of the balloon. Wise, the American, came down twice with a burst balloon. This is always due to the same cause—the closing of the safety-valve through some entanglement of the cord. Normally, the valve is always open, and the increased pressure due to the heat of the sun or a high elevation is thus counteracted by a certain automatic escape of gas; but, in 1868, Mr. Glaisher, accompanied by M. Duruof, made an ascent in the 'Neptune,' and, trying to descend in a strong wind, the valve-rope got blown up. Duruof immediately climbed into the hoop to disentangle it, when a sharp upward gust caught the balloon and it burst with a loud crack from top to bottom. They had to fall about 200 feet only. They had both leapt into the hoop, and the car came down with an awful crash; but the balloon in bursting was spread by the wind into a kind of kite, which, to some extent, broke their fall. As they came down with the hoop the car turned over on them, and when the peasants rushed up expecting to find them dead they were greeted with shouts of irrepressible laughter—so strange are the emotional vicissitudes of unforeseen events!

Descents in the sea, though much dreaded by aeronauts, have not been so disastrous as they sound.

In 1803 Count Zambeccari and Dr. Grassati fell into the Adriatic, after reaching a height at which the Count became insensible. The taste of salt water revived them, and they threw out enough ballast to rise into the clouds drenched, where they were soon half-frozen and got quite deaf. To their horror the balloon again descended, and, on touching the water, bounded in and out, wind-driven towards the coast of Istria. This went on from three till eight in the morning, when they were picked up by a boat.

The buoyancy of the balloon will keep the car afloat a considerable time, and a mere handful of ballast in any shape will suffice to give it a small rise.

When Green fell into the sea in 1850, he came down in a strong wind near Sheerness. The balloon acted like a kite, and dragged him through the water in his car with great rapidity. He had the presence of mind to throw out his grapnel into the

deep sea. It caught in a sunken wreck, and there he was able to keep afloat and wait patiently until picked up by fishermen.

Next to the sea, or a river, a forest is about the most awkward place for a balloon descent. You can always calculate to some extent where you are likely to drop.

I was once floating over a fair estate at an elevation of about 5,000 feet, and as there was little wind and night was drawing on, we elected to descend in a wide green meadow on the brink of an oak forest. We dropped down 2,000 feet, and still thought we were over the field; but upon dropping down another 2,500 feet pretty sharply, we found we should miss the field and alight on the forest. I shall never forget the beautiful and novel appearance of that oak forest. I looked down upon an apparently level soft bed of billowy green; it looked like an oil painting on canvas—so very unreal. We had only one ballast bag left; the balloon car soon rested on the trees; it sank in; the temptation to throw out ballast was almost irresistible, but Wright, my aeronaut, would not allow it. The car went crashing and tearing through the trees, and so we travelled till we came to the verge of the wood. Wright then called to the rustics to come into the wood and seize the ropes. At last, 'Over with the bag!' he cried, and we rose above the wood, and were towed on to a footpath. Again the car descended—the ripe corn stood all around. I got out, and this gave the balloon its last ascensive power. The balloon was then towed along the path through two corn-fields, without injuring the crops, and finally came down in an open meadow. There was very little wind, but I fancy a balloon car tossed amongst forest trees on a windy day would not long retain its occupants. But the experiences of ascent are to me far more interesting, and certainly, in the case of high ascents, no whit less dangerous. For the highest ascents, or for very long journeys, a big balloon is indispensable. The balloon which dropped me so unceremoniously in an oak forest contained only 27,000 cubic feet of gas; but Nadar's balloon held 215,363 cubic feet, and Green's famous 'Nassau' was still larger. I remember it perfectly well. It was not at one time a very uncommon thing to observe it floating over London. If I recollect rightly, 'Nassau' was written upon it in big letters.

In 1836 Mr. Green, accompanied by Monck Mason, of Italian opera notoriety, and Mr. Robert Holland, left the earth at one o'clock in the fading light of a winter's day. As the twilight deepened, they heard the sound of the breakers, and knew they were over

the sea. All night they were wafted along, whither they knew not ; but, keeping up at a safe elevation of 10,000 to 12,000 feet, they supposed themselves at five o'clock next morning to be over France ; but when the sun rose, and they descended below the clouds, they found large tracts of snow beneath them, and fancied they might be floating over Poland, or have reached even the inhospitable steppes of Russia. On descending nearer to earth, they glided over a wooded valley and came down, as I did, on the top of a forest. The language of the people who crowded to meet them was evidently German. In fact, they were only a few miles from Weilburg, in the Duchy of Nassau, having travelled 500 miles in eighteen hours. This is the longest aerial voyage on record.

In the high ascents people's experiences vary somewhat. Some get blue in the face above three miles. I grow a little deaf at about a mile high ; I also am conscious of the quickened action of the heart. At a mile and a half high I have heard distinctly the barking of a dog, but at four miles high the roar of London is hushed, and at seven miles from the earth absolute and awful silence reigns. The sky is the deepest Prussian blue. This is due to the action of the air, which intercepts only the actinic or blue rays of the sun. The pressure of the air varies according to the height : on the surface of the earth it is 15 lbs., at three miles and three-quarters $7\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and at six miles 5 lbs.

At 9,800 feet the cork will fly out of your water-bottle, and a pigeon will drop some way down like a stone before it gets a bite for its wings. People are variously affected by these altitudes. Seven miles seems to be the limit at which you can breathe, but Mr. Glaisher is sure that with practice one might breathe much higher. A good air-seasoned constitution can at all times stand much more than that of a novice.

Mr. Glaisher has favoured us with his own personal experiences in several stirring narratives. His pulse is 76 on earth, 90 at 10,000 feet up, 100 at 20,000, and up to 110 as long as he retains his senses. At 10,000 he tells us he was purple in the face ; at 17,000, his lips were blue ; at 19,000, his hands and lips dark blue ; at four miles up, the beating of his heart became audible and his breathing quick and difficult ; at 29,000 he became insensible. He was at this time up in Coxwell's big balloon, holding 90,000 cubic feet of gas. The last thing he noticed was Coxwell, who was himself almost frozen and in great distress for breath, climbing into the hoop in order to release the valve-rope, which had stuck. Up to 29,000 feet Glaisher had continued

taking observations. He had then asked Coxwell to help him read the instruments—his eyes had given way; but soon after that his head swam, he could just see dimly Coxwell in the hoop trying to loosen the valve, and heard the words ‘temperature’ and ‘observation.’ It appears Coxwell had come down after that, and staggering towards Glaisher, found him lying insensible, with his head over the brink of the car. He had tried to rouse him, and it is characteristic of Coxwell’s scientific enthusiasm that at the very moment when he thought Glaisher might be dead, Glaisher himself was just able to distinguish the words, ‘Do try now—do!’ and as his consciousness shortly returned he found Coxwell pushing the instruments towards him.

No one will ever know quite how high they went on that memorable day, as the aneroid ceased to figure and the water was frozen in the wet-bulb thermometer. Their escape was no doubt a narrow one. Coxwell was almost insensible; he had nearly lost power over his limbs, and, unable to lift his arms, he caught the valve-cord in his mouth and dropped with it into the car. His hands were frozen.

They reached a point that day 82° below freezing point, and Mr. Glaisher reckons the ascent at not less than 30,000 feet. This is the highest point ever reached by living man who has returned to tell the tale.

Nose, ear, and throat bleeding is not uncommon at high altitudes, as well as palpitation of the heart, deafness, blindness, and at last insensibility; but there is one odd peculiarity about these air voyages which gives them a certain superiority over sea voyages—no one seems the worse for them afterwards. Mr. Glaisher finishes his appalling narrative with these cheery words: ‘No inconvenience followed my insensibility; and when we dropped it was in a country where no conveyance of any kind could be obtained, so I had to walk between seven and eight miles.’

I should here *en passant* like to recommend to the faculty for investigation the therapeutic influences of ballooning. Mr. Glaisher seriously affirms that on one occasion he went up with a bad influenza cold and came down cured.

Future generations of valetudinarians will probably repair as regularly each summer to a well-regulated balloon infirmary, as they do now to the waters of Aix or Buxton, or the baths of Brighton and Biarritz. To my mind water has too long been curing everything under the sun, and I do not see why the air

should not have a turn. I am persuaded that if an experienced air doctor, who had himself been cured of vast quantities of complaints at an elevation of 10,000 feet, would only write a scientific pamphlet and put up a brass plate in Harley Street, he would have what the French call *un succès fou*.

All who have made anything like high ascents have exhausted tropes and figures in attempting to describe their emotions in the presence of what they beheld. To my thinking it is too much like trying to describe music: when all is said, the emotion is not reproduced or but very faintly. Still we have at least to deal with visual objects and scenic effects. The horror and mystery of suddenly coming to a black cloud 8,000 feet thick—so thick that the balloon ceased to be visible from the car—this can be realised. It was Glaisher's experience in Coxwell's big balloon.

A snowstorm at high altitudes is very impressive and lonesome. About 10,000 feet above Camberwell, in the middle of a hot June, Mr. Lithgoe told me he was refreshed with one, and came down with his balloon in midsummer still covered with snow.

I have noticed the strangely solid, fixed, and often motionless appearance of the white billowy clouds, treacherous pillows inviting one to step out and recline upon them without a hint of instability. Presently, smitten with a crimson cloud, their edges may break into flame, and as one looks, a silent rift is made, and through them is seen a distant wilderness of the deep firmamental blue. Let us ascend soon after sunset in imagination.

Nothing can exceed the weird solemnity of night in a balloon. To float above London and see the whole city like one vast flame-map at one's feet, twelve square miles of irradiated streets, with the winding river picked out by the electric light, and as one rises the whole shrunk to about the size of a chess-board. This vision in a moment reduces the mightiest city in the world to the proportion of a toy.

The earth itself, as we ascend higher and higher, loses importance in the 'clear obscure' above us, to which we seem hurrying apace. Only the heavens are now worthy of contemplation, but the stars are changed; they hang more golden and globular as in the tropics, or as in the poet's vision—

'The clear galaxy
Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful
Distinct and vivid with sharp points of light.'

As a cloud rolls away from the 'opal widths' of the moon, the

stars grow faint. She is light, but hangs in the blue blackness, and seems to give no light, so greatly attenuated is the light-bearing ether in which we now swim. Perhaps the physical emotions confuse or intensify the power of the eye.

This singing in my ears is oppressive; this constant oozing of blood in my mouth is, to say the least, trying. I am also very cold, the thermometer many degrees below zero; but the cold is dry and bearable, and there is little wind; but a black veil hangs beneath, just edged here and there with silver and shot with moon-flakes. My head begins to swim; pull the valve, let us descend. Down through the night, into the moon-flaked cloud; 'tis five hundred feet thick, and seems to have formed in a moment. It hangs above us now. Still down, down, thousands of feet. The lights of earth gleam feebly beneath me like tiny sparks. The great city has vanished. I have had no sense of travelling, but I have floated clear over London. The rapidity of our descent has been terrific; in another moment I smell the hay. 'Tis midnight the still summer fields are close beneath us. The moonlight is now diffused and soft, the air is warm and scented. The car drops silently like a feather; we alight on the new-mown hay.

One more reflection. When I looked down for the first time from a height of four thousand feet, and saw the minute creeping things called men, scarce visible, like black specks upon the surface of the earth, I could not help saying with Goethe, as he stood upon one of the topmost Alps, 'What is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him?' I suffered, as I suppose most of us at some time or other have suffered, from the cheat of the senses. I asked myself what is the proportion between man and the universe, or in other words, what is the proportion between mind and matter? It took me a few seconds to recover my mental equilibrium. I was then able to answer calmly, There is no proportion whatever between mind and matter—the two things are not *in pari materiâ*; between man and the universe there can be no comparison; his apparent insignificance is but a cheat of the senses. Mind has nothing in common with size, weight. A Thought is not measured; Love cannot be put into scales; Will cannot be decomposed in the crucible. The earth-envelope of mind is not the measure of mind. Mind, in association with the infinitesimal speck of matter called brain, built ycn huge city, poised me in this car four thousand feet above it; for man, physically so tiny, spiritually is in close relation with Almighty Spirit. Man rules nature. He is greater than the sun and all the stars. They feel

not, know not, aspire not. Man, the perceiver, transcends the perceived that perceives not. Man perceives the material universe, which perceives not him. He perceives God, who perceives him; from whence he comes, and unto whom he shall return. He aspires, he prays.

I think, perhaps, of all the many thoughts that crowded upon me, this meditative deliverance from the illusions of sense, this clear separation between the relative dignity of mind and matter, remains to me as the deepest and most precious experience of my travels in the air.

H. R. HAWEIS.

Madam.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE incident of that evening had a very disturbing effect upon the family at Bonport. Little Amy, waking next morning much astonished to find herself in Rosalind's room, and very faintly remembering what had happened, was subjected at once to questionings more earnest than judicious—questionings which brought everything to her mind, with a renewal of all the agitation of the night. But the child had nothing to say beyond what she had said before: that she had dreamt of mamma, that mamma had called her to come down to the lake, and be taken home; that she wanted to go home, to go to mamma—oh, to go to mamma! but Rosalind said she was dead, and Sophy said they were never, never to see her again. Then Amy flung herself upon her sister's breast and implored to be taken to her mother. 'You don't know how wicked I was, Rosalind. Russell used to say things, till I stopped loving mamma—oh, I did, and did not mind when she went away! But now! where is she, where is she? Oh, Rosalind! oh, Rosalind! will she never come back? Oh, do you think she is angry, or that she does not care for me any more? Oh, Rosalind, is she dead, and will she never come back?' This cry seemed to come from Amy's very soul. She could not be stilled. She lay in Rosalind's bed, as white as the hangings about her, not much more than a pair of dark eyes looking out with eagerness unspeakable. And Rosalind, who had gone through so many vicissitudes of feeling—who had stood by the mother who was not her mother with so much loyalty, yet had yielded to the progress of events, and had not known, in the ignorance of her youth, what to do or say, or how to stand against it—Rosalind was seized all at once by a vehement determination and an intolerable sense that the present position of affairs was impossible and could not last.

'Oh, my darling!' she cried; 'get well and strong, and you and I will go and look for her, and never, never be taken from her again!'

'But, Rosalind, if mamma is dead!' cried little Amy.

The elder people who witnessed this scene stole out of the room, unable to bear it any longer.

'It must be put a stop to,' John Trevanion said in a voice that was sharp with pain.

'Oh, who can put a stop to it?' cried Mrs. Lennox, weeping, and recovering herself and weeping again. 'I should not have wondered, not at all, if it had happened at first; but after these years! And I that thought children were heartless little things, and that they had forgot!'

'Can Russell do nothing, now you have got her here?' he cried with impatience, walking up and down the room. He was at his wits' end, and in his perplexity felt himself incapable even of thought.

'Oh, John, did you not hear what that little thing said? She put the children against their mother. Amy will not let Russell come near her. If I have made a mistake, I meant it for the best. Russell is as miserable as any of us. Johnny has forgotten her, and Amy cannot endure the sight of her. And now it appears that coming to Bonport, which was your idea, is a failure too, though I am sure we both did it for the best.'

'That is all that could be said for us if we were a couple of well-intentioned fools,' he cried. 'And indeed we seem to have acted like fools in all that concerns the children,' he added with a sort of bitterness. 'For what right had fate to lay such a burden upon him—him who had scrupulously preserved himself, or been preserved by Providence, from any such business of his own?'

'John,' said Mrs. Lennox, drying her eyes, 'I don't think there is so much to blame yourself about. You felt sure it would be better for them being here; and when you put it to me, so did I. You never thought of the lake. Why should you think of the lake? We never let them go near it without somebody to take care of them in the day, and how could any one suppose that at night——'

Upon this her brother seized his hat and hurried from the house. The small aggravation seemed to fill up his cup, so that he could bear no more—with this addition, that Mrs. Lennox's soft purr of a voice roused mere exasperation in him, while his every thought of the children, even when the cares they brought threatened to overwhelm him, was tender with natural affection. But in fact, wherever he turned at this moment he saw not a gleam of light, and there was a bitterness as of the deferred and unforeseen in this sudden gathering together of clouds and dangers which filled him almost with awe. The catastrophe itself had passed over much more quietly than could have been thought. But lo, here when no fear was, the misery came. His heart melted within him when he thought of Amy's little pale face, and that forlorn expedition in the stillness of the night to the side of the lake which betrayed, as nothing else could have done, the feverish working of her brain and the disturbance of her entire being. What madness of rage and jealousy must that have been that induced a man to leave this legacy of misery behind him to work in the minds of his little children years after he was dead! and

what appalling cruelty and tyranny it was which made it possible for a dead man, upon whom neither argument nor proof could be brought to bear, thus to blight by a word so many lives! All had passed with a strange simplicity at first, and with such swift and silent carrying out of the terrible conditions of the will, that there had been no time to think if any expedient was possible. Looking back upon it, it seemed to him incredible that anything so extraordinary should have taken place with so little disturbance. *She* had accepted her fate without a word, and every one else had accepted it. The bitterness of death seemed to have passed except for the romance of devotion on Rosalind's part, which he believed had faded in the other kind of romance more natural at her age. No one but himself had appeared to remember at all this catastrophe which rent life asunder. But now, when no one expected it, out of the clear sky came the explosions of the storm. He had decided too quickly that all was over. The peace had been but a pretence, and now the whole matter would have to be re-opened again.

The cause of the sudden return of all minds to the great family disaster and misery seemed to him more than ever confused by this last event. The condition which had led to Amy's last adventure seemed to make it more possible, notwithstanding Sophy's supposed discovery, that the story of the apparition was an illusion throughout. The child, always a visionary child, must have had, in the unnatural and strained condition of her nerves and long repression of her feelings, a dream so vivid as, like that of last night, to take the aspect of reality; and Rosalind, full of sympathy, and with all her own keen recollections ready to be called forth at a touch, must have received the contagion from her little sister, and seen what Amy had so long imagined she saw. Perhaps even it was the same contagion, acting on a matter-of-fact temperament, which had induced Sophy to believe that she too had seen her mother—but in real flesh and blood. Of all the hypotheses that could be thought of, this seemed to him the most impossible. He had examined all the hotel registers, and made anxious inquiries everywhere, without finding a trace of Mrs. Trevanion. She had not, so far as he was aware, renounced her own name. And, even had she done so, it was impossible that she could have been in the hotel without some one seeing her, without leaving some trace behind. Notwithstanding this certainty, John Trevanion, even while he repeated his conviction to himself, was making his way once more to the hotel to see whether, by any impossibility, some light might still be thrown upon a subject which had become so urgent. Yet even that, though it was the first thing that presented itself to him, had become in fact a secondary matter. The real question in this, as in all difficulties, was what to do next? What could be done to unravel the fatal tangle? Now that he contemplated the matter from afar,

it became to him all at once a thing intolerable—a thing that must no longer be allowed to exist. What was publicity, what was scandal, in comparison with this wreck of life? There must be means, he declared to himself, of setting an unrighteous will aside, whatever lawyers might say. His own passiveness seemed incredible to him, as well as the extraordinary composure with which everybody else had acquiesced, accepting the victim's sacrifice. But that was over. Even though the present agitation should pass away, he vowed to himself that it should not pass from him until he had done all that man could do to set the wrong right.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was walking into Aix with the speed of a man who has urgent work before him, though that work was nothing more definite or practical than the examination over again of the hotel books to see if there he could find any clue. He turned them over and over in his abstraction, going back without knowing it to distant dates, and roaming over an endless succession of names which conveyed no idea to his mind. He came at last, on the last page, to the name of Arthur Rivers, with a dull sort of surprise. 'To be sure Rivers is here!' he said to himself aloud.

'Yes, to be sure I am here. I have been waiting to see if you would find me out,' Rivers said behind him. John did not give him so cordial a welcome as he had done on the previous night.

'I beg your pardon,' he said. 'I have so much on my mind I forget everything. Were you coming out to see my sister? We can walk together. The sun is warm, but not too hot for walking. That's an advantage of this time of the year.'

'It is perhaps too early for Mrs. Lennox,' Rivers said.

'Oh no, not too early. The truth is, we are in a little confusion. One of the children has been giving us a great deal of anxiety.'

'Then perhaps,' said Rivers, with desperate politeness, 'it will be better for me not to go.' He felt within himself, though he was so civil, a sort of brutal indifference to their insignificant distresses, which were nothing in comparison with his own. To come so far, in order to eat his breakfast under the dusty trees, and dine at the table d'hôte in a half-empty hotel at Aix, seemed to him so great an injustice and scorn in the midst of his fame and importance, that even the discovery he had made, though it could not but tell in the situation, passed from his mind in the heat of offended consequence and pride.

John Trevanion, for his part, noticed the feeling of the other as little as Rivers did his. 'One of the children has been walking in her sleep,' he said. 'I don't want to get a fool of a doctor who thinks of nothing but rheumatism. One of them filled my good sister's mind with folly about suppressed gout. Poor little Amy! She has a most susceptible brain, and I am afraid something has upset it. Do you believe in ghosts, Rivers?'

'As much as everybody does,' said Rivers, recovering himself a little.

'That is about all that any one can say. This child thinks she has seen one. She is a silent little thing. She has gone on suffering and never said a word, and the consequence is, her little head has got all wrong.'

By this time Rivers, having cooled down, began to see the importance of the disclosure he had to make. He said, 'Would you mind telling me what the apparition was? You will understand, Trevanion, that I don't want to pry into your family concerns, and that I would not ask without a reason.'

John Trevanion looked at him intently with a startled curiosity and earnestness. 'I can't suppose,' he said, 'when it comes to that, much as we have paid for concealment, that you have not heard something——'

'Miss Trevanion told me,' said Rivers—he paused a moment, feeling that it was a cruel wrong to him that he should be compelled to say Miss Trevanion—he who ought to have been called to her side at once, who should have been in a position to claim her before the world as his Rosalind—'Miss Trevanion gave me to understand that the lady whom I had met in Spain, whose portrait was on her table, was——'

'My sister-in-law—the mother of the children—yes, yes,—and what then?' John Trevanion cried.

'Only this, Trevanion—that lady is here.'

John caught him by the arm, so fiercely, so suddenly, that the leisurely waiters standing about and the few hotel guests who were moving out and in in the quiet of the morning stopped and stared with ideas of rushing to the rescue. 'What do you mean?' he said; 'here! How do you know? It is impossible.'

'Come out into the garden, where we can talk. It may be impossible, but it is true. I also saw her last night.'

'You must be mad or dreaming, Rivers. You too—a man in your senses—and—God in heaven!' he said, with a sudden bitter sense of his own unappreciated friendship—unappreciated even, it would seem, beyond the grave—'that she should have come, whatever she had to say, to you—to any one—and not to me!'

'Trevanion, you are mistaken. This is no apparition. There was no choice, of me or any one. That poor lady, whether sinned against or sinning I have no knowledge, is here. Do you understand me? She is here.'

They were standing by this time in the shadow of the great laurel bushes where she had sheltered on the previous night. John Trevanion said nothing for a moment. He cast himself down on one of the seats to recover his breath. It was just where Hamerton had been sitting. Rivers almost expected to see the faint stir in the bushes, the evidence of some one listening, to whom the words spoken might, as she said, be death or life.

'This is extraordinary news,' said Trevanion at last. 'You will pardon me if I was quite overwhelmed by it. Rivers, you can't think how important it is. Where can I find her? You need not fear to betray her—oh, heaven, to betray her to me, her brother! But you need not fear. She knows that there is no one who has more—more regard, more respect, or more—— Let me know where to find her, my good fellow, for heaven's sake!'

'Trevanion, it is not any doubt of you. But, in the first place, I don't know where to find her, and then—she did not disclose herself to me. I found her out by accident. Have I any right to dispose of her secret? I will tell you everything I know,' he added hastily, in answer to the look and gesture, almost of despair, which John could not restrain. 'Last night your friend, young Hamerton, was talking—injudiciously, I think'—there was a little sweetness to him in saying this, even in the midst of real sympathy and interest—'he was talking of what was going on in your house. I had already seen some one walking about the garden whose appearance I seemed to recollect. When Hamerton mentioned your name——' (he was anxious that this should be made fully evident) 'she heard it: and by-and-by I perceived that some one was listening, behind you, just there, in the laurels.'

John started up and turned round, gazing at the motionless glistening screen of leaves, as if she might still be there. After a moment—'And what then?'

'Not much more. I spoke to her afterwards. She asked me, for the love of God, to bring her news, and I promised—what I could—for to-night.'

John Trevanion held out his hand, and gave that of Rivers a strong pressure. 'Come out with me to Bonport. You must hear everything, and perhaps you can advise me. I am determined to put an end to the situation somehow, whatever it may cost,' he said.

CHAPTER LV.

THE two men went out to Bonport together, and on the way John Trevanion, half revolted that he should have to tell it, half relieved to talk of it to another man, and see how the matter appeared to a person unconcerned, with eyes clear from prepossession of any kind, either hostile or tender, gave his companion all the particulars of his painful story. It was a relief; and Rivers, who had been trained for the bar, gave it at once as his opinion that the competent authorities would not hesitate to set such a will aside, or at least, on proof that no moral danger would arise to the children, would modify its restrictions greatly. 'Wills are sacred theoretically; but there has always been a power of re-

vision,' he said. And he suggested practical means of bringing this point to a trial—or at least to the preliminary trial of counsel's advice, which gave his companion great solace. 'I can see that we all acted like fools,' John Trevanion confessed, with a momentary over-confidence that his troubles might be approaching an end. 'We were terrified for the scandal, the public discussion, that would have been sure to rise—and no one so much as she. Old Blake was all for the sanctity of the will, as you say—and I—I was so torn in two with doubts and—miseries——'

'But I presume,' Rivers said, 'these have all been put to rest. There has been a satisfactory explanation——'

'Explanation!' cried John. 'Do you think I could ask, or she condescend to give, what you call explanations? She knew her own honour and purity; and she knew,' he added with a long-drawn breath, 'that I knew them as well as she——'

'Still,' said Rivers, 'explanations are necessary when it is brought before the public.'

'It shall never be brought before the public!'

'My dear Trevanion! How then are you to do anything—how set the will aside?'

This question silenced John; and it took further speech out of the mouth of his companion, who felt on his side that if he were about to be connected with the Trevanion family, it would not be at all desirable, on any consideration, that this story should become public. He had been full of interest in the woman whose appearance had struck him before he knew anything about her, and who had figured so largely in his first acquaintance with Rosalind. But when it became a question of a great scandal occupying every mind and tongue, and in which it was possible his own wife might be concerned—that was a very different matter. In a great family such things are treated with greater ease. If it is true that an infringement on their honour, a blot on the scutcheon, is supposed to be of more importance where there is a noble scutcheon to tarnish, it is yet true that a great family history would lose much of its interest if it were not crossed now and then by a shadow of darkness, a tale to make the hearers shudder; and that those who are accustomed to feel themselves always objects of interest to the world bear the shame of an occasional disclosure far better than those sprung from a lowlier level whose life is sacred to themselves, and who guard their secrets far more jealously than either the great or the very small. Rivers, in the depth of his nature, which was not that of a born patrician, trembled at the thought of public interference in the affairs of a family with which he should be connected. All the more that it would be an honour and elevation to him to be connected with it, he trembled to have its secrets published. It was not till after he had given his advice on the subject that this drawback occurred to him. He was not a bad man, to doom another to suffer that

his own surroundings might go free: but when he thought of it he resolved that, if he could bring it about, Rosalind's enthusiasm should be calmed down, and she should learn to feel for her step-mother only that calm affection which stepmothers at the best are worthy of, and which means separation rather than unity of interests. He pondered this during the latter part of the way with great abstraction of thought. He was very willing to take advantage of his knowledge of Mrs. Trevanion, and of the importance it gave him to be their only means of communication with her; but further than this he did not mean to go. Were Rosalind once his, there should certainly be no room in his house for a stepmother of blemished fame.

And there were many things in his visit to Bonport which were highly unsatisfactory to Rivers. John Trevanion was 'so entirely wrapt in his own cares as to be very inconsiderate of his friend, whose real object in presenting himself at Aix at all he must no doubt have divined had he been in possession of his full intelligence. He took the impatient lover into the grounds of the house where Rosalind was, and expected him to take an interest in the winding walks by which little Amy had strayed down to the lake, and all the scenery of that foolish little episode. 'If her sister had not followed her, what might have happened? The child might have been drowned, or, worse still, might have gone mad in the shock of finding herself out there all alone. It makes one shudder to think of it.' Rivers did not shudder; he was not very much interested about Amy. But his nerves were all jarred by the contrariety of the circumstances as he looked up through the shade of the trees to the house at the top of the little eminence where Rosalind was, but as much out of his reach as if she had been at the end of the world. He did not see her until much later, when he returned at John Trevanion's invitation to dinner. Rosalind was very pale, but blushed when she met him with a consciousness which he scarcely knew how to interpret. Was there hope in the blush, or was it embarrassment—almost pain? She said scarcely anything during dinner, sitting in the shadow of the pink *abat-jour*, and of her aunt Sophy, who, glad of a new listener, poured forth her soul upon the subject of sleep-walking, and told a hundred stories, experiences of her own and of other people, all tending to prove that it was the most usual thing in the world, and that indeed most children walked in their sleep. 'The thing to do is to be very careful not to wake them,' Mrs. Lennox said. 'That was Rosalind's mistake. Oh, my dear, there is no need to tell me that you didn't mean anything that wasn't for the best. Nobody who has ever seen how devoted you are to these children—just like a mother—could suppose that; but I understand,' said Aunt Sophy with an air of great wisdom, 'that you should never wake them. Follow to see that they come to no harm, and sometimes you may be able to

guide them back to their own room—which is always the best thing to do—but *never wake them*; that is the one thing you must always avoid.’

‘I should think Rivers has had about enough of Amy’s somnambulism by this time,’ John said. ‘Tell us something about yourself. Are you going to stay long? Are you on your way northwards? All kinds of honour and glory await you at home, we know.’

‘My movements are quite vague. I have settled nothing,’ Rivers replied. And how could he help but look at Rosalind, who, though she never lifted her eyes and could not have seen his look, yet changed colour in some incomprehensible way? And how could he see that she changed colour in the pink gloom of the shade, which obscured everything, especially such a change as that? But he did see it, and Rosalind was aware he did so. Notwithstanding his real interest in the matter, it was hard for him to respond to John Trevanion’s questions about the meeting planned for this evening. It had been arranged between them that John should accompany Rivers back to the hotel, that he should be at hand should the mysterious lady consent to see him; and the thought of this possible interview was to him as absorbing as was the question of Rosalind’s looks to his companion. But they had not much to say to each other, each being full of his own thoughts as they sat together for those few minutes after dinner which were inevitable. Then they followed each other gloomily into the drawing-room, which was vacant, though a sound of voices from outside the open window betrayed where the ladies had gone. Mrs. Lennox came indoors as they approached. ‘It is a little cold,’ she said, with a shiver. But Rivers found it balm as he stepped out and saw Rosalind leaning upon the verandah among the late roses, with the moonlight making a sort of silvery gauze of her light dress. He came out and placed himself by her; but the window stood open behind, with John Trevanion within hearing, and Mrs. Lennox’s voice running on quite audibly close at hand. Was it always to be so? He drew very near to her, and said in a low voice, ‘May I not speak to you?’ Rosalind looked at him with eyes which were full of a beseeching earnestness. She did not pretend to be ignorant of what he meant. The moonlight gave an additional depth of pathetic meaning to her face, out of which it stole all the colour.

‘Oh, Mr. Rivers, not now!’ she said, with an appeal which he could not resist. Poor Rivers turned and left her in the excitement of the moment. He went along the terrace to the further side with a poor pretence of looking at the landscape, in reality to think out the situation. What could he say to recommend himself, to put himself in the foreground of her thoughts? A sudden suggestion flashed upon him, and he snatched at it without further consideration. When he returned to where he had

left her, Rosalind was still there, apparently waiting. She advanced towards him shyly, with a sense of having given him pain. 'I am going in now to Amy,' she said; 'I waited to bid you good night.'

'One word,' he said. 'Oh, nothing about myself, Miss Trevanion. I will wait, if I must not speak. But I have a message for you.'

'A message—for me!' She came a little nearer to him, with that strange divination which accompanies great mental excitement, feeling instinctively that what he was about to say must bear upon the subject of her thoughts.

'You remember,' he said, 'the lady whom I told you I had met? I have met her again, Miss Trevanion.'

'Where?' She turned upon him with a cry, imperative and passionate.

'Miss Trevanion, I have never forgotten the look you gave me when I said that the lady was accompanied by a man. I want to explain; I have found out who it was.'

'Mr. Rivers!'

'Should I be likely to tell you anything unfit for your ears to hear? I know better now. The poor lady is not happy, in that any more than in any other particular of her lot. The man was her son.'

'*Her son!*' Rosalind's cry was such that it made Mrs. Lennox stop in her talk; and John Trevanion, from the depths of the dark room behind, came forward to know what it was.

'I felt that I must tell you; you reproached me with your eyes when I said—— But if I wronged her, I must make reparation. It was in all innocence and honour—it was her son.'

'Mr. Rivers!' cried Rosalind, turning upon him, her breast heaving, her lips quivering, 'this shows it is a mistake. I might have known all the time it was a mistake. She had no son except—— It was not the same. Thank you for wishing to set me right; but it could not be the same. It is no one we know. It is a mistake.'

'But when I tell you, Miss Trevanion, that she said——'

'No, no, you must not say any more. We know nothing; it is a mistake.' Disappointment, with at the same time a strange poignant smart, as of some chance arrow striking her in the dark which wounded her without reason, without aim, filled her mind. She turned quickly, eluding the hand which Rivers had stretched out, not pausing even for her uncle, and hastened away without a word. John Trevanion turned upon Rivers, who came in slowly from the verandah with a changed and wondering look. 'What have you been saying to Rosalind? You seem to have frightened her,' he said.

'Oh, it seems all a mistake,' he replied vaguely. He was, in fact, greatly cast down by the sudden check he had received. In

the height of his consciousness that his own position as holding a clue to the whereabouts of this mysterious woman was immeasurably advantaged, there came upon him this chill of doubt lest perhaps after all—— But then she had herself declared that to hear of the Trevanions was to her as life and death. Rivers did not know how to reconcile Rosalind's instant change of tone, her evident certainty that his information did not concern her, with the impassioned interest of the woman whom he half felt that he had betrayed. How he had acquired the information which he had thought it would be a good thing for him thus to convey, he could scarcely have told. It had been partly divination, partly some echo of recollection; but he felt certain that he was right; and he had also felt certain that to hear it would please Rosalind. He was altogether cast down by her reception of his news. He did not recover himself during all the long walk back to Aix in the moonlight, which he made in company with John Trevanion. But John was absorbed in the excitement of the expected meeting, and did not disturb him by much talking. They walked along between the straight lines of the trees, through black depths of shadow and the white glory of the light, exchanging few words, each wrapt in his own atmosphere. When the lights of the town were close to them, John spoke. 'Whether she will speak to me or not, you must place me where I can see her, Rivers. I must make sure.'

'I will do the best I can,' said Rivers; 'but what if it should all turn out to be a mistake?'

'How can it be a mistake? Who else would listen as you say she did? Who else could take so much interest? But I must make sure. Place me at least where I may see her, even if I must not speak.'

The garden was nearly deserted, only one or two solitary figures in shawls and overcoats still lingering in the beauty of the moonlight. Rivers placed John standing in the shadow of a piece of shrubbery, close to the open space which she had crossed as she made her round of the little promenade: and he himself took the seat under the laurels which he had occupied on the previous night. He thought there was no doubt that she would come to him, that after the hotel people had disappeared she would be on the watch and hasten to hear what he had to tell her. When time passed on and no one appeared, he got up again and began himself to walk round and round, pausing now and then to whisper to John Trevanion that he did not understand it—that he could not imagine what could be the cause of the delay. They waited thus till midnight, till the unfortunate waiters in the verandah were nearly distracted, and every intimation of the late hour which these unhappy men could venture to give had been given. When twelve struck, tingling through the blue air, John Trevanion came finally out of his hiding-place, and Rivers from his chair. They

spoke in whispers as conspirators instinctively do, though there was nobody to hear. 'I cannot understand it,' said Rivers, with the disconcerted air of a man whose exhibition has failed. 'I don't think it is of any use waiting longer,' said John. 'Oh, of no use. I am very sorry, Trevanion. I confidently expected——' 'Something,' said John, 'must have happened to detain her. I am disappointed, but still I do not cease to hope; and if in the meantime you see her, or any trace of her——' 'You may be sure I will do my best,' Rivers said, ashamed, though it was no fault of his, and, notwithstanding Rosalind's refusal to believe, with all his faith in his own conclusions restored.

They shook hands silently, and John Trevanion went away downcast and disappointed. When he had gone down the narrow street and emerged into the Place, which lay full in the moonlight, he saw two tall dark shadows in the very centre of the white vacancy and brightness in the deserted square. They caught his attention for the moment, and he remembered after, that a vague question crossed his mind, what two women could be doing out so late. Were they Sisters of Charity, returning from some labour of love? Thus he passed them quickly, yet with a passing wonder, touched, he could not tell how, by something forlorn in the two solitary women, returning he knew not from what errand. Had he but known who these wayfarers were!

CHAPTER LVI.

Two days after this, while as yet there had appeared no further solution of the mystery, Roland Hamerton came hastily one morning up the sloping paths of Bonport into the garden, where he knew he should find Rosalind. He was in the position of a sort of outdoor member of the household, going and coming at his pleasure, made no account of, enjoying the privileges of a son and brother rather than of a lover. But the advantages of this position were great. He saw Rosalind at all hours, in all circumstances, and he was himself so much concerned about little Amy and so full of earnest interest in everything that affected the family, that he was admitted even to the most intimate consultations. To Rosalind his presence had given a support and help which she could not have imagined possible, especially in contrast with Rivers, who approached her with that almost threatening demand for a final explanation, and shaped every word and action so as to show that the reason for his presence here was her and her only. Roland's self-control and unfeigned desire to promote her comfort first of all, before he thought of himself, was in perfect contrast to this, and consolatory beyond measure. She had got to be afraid of Rivers; she was not at all afraid of the humble lover who was at the same time her old

friend, who was young like herself, who knew everything that had happened. This was the state to which she had come in that famous competition between the three, who ought, as Mr. Ruskin says, to have been seven. One she had withdrawn altogether from, putting him out of the lists with mingled repulsion and pity. Another she had been seized with a terror of, as of a man lying in wait to devour her. The third—he was no one; he was only Roland; her lover in the nursery, her faithful attendant all her life. She was not afraid of him, nor of any exaction on his part. Her heart turned to him with a simple reliance. He was not clever, he was not distinguished; he had executed for her none of the labours either of Hercules or any other hero. He had on his side no attractions of natural beauty, or any of those vague appeals to the imagination which had given Everard a certain power over her; and he had not carried her image with him, as Rivers had done, through danger and conflict, or brought back any laurels to lay at her feet. If it had been a matter of competition, as in the days of chivalry, or in the scheme of our gentle yet vehement philosopher, Roland would have had little chance. But after the year was over in which Rosalind had known of the competition for her favour, he it was who remained nearest. She glanced up with an alarmed look to see who was coming, and her face cleared when she saw it was Roland. He would force no considerations upon her, ask no tremendous questions. She gave him a smile as he approached. She was seated under the trees, with the lake gleaming behind for a background through an opening in the foliage. Mrs. Lennox's chair still stood on the same spot, but she was not there. There were some books on the table, but Rosalind was not reading. She had some needlework in her hands, but that was little more than a pretence; she was thinking, and all her thoughts were directed to one subject. She smiled when he came up, yet grudged to lose the freedom of those endless thoughts. 'I thought,' she said, 'you were on the water with Rex.'

'No, I told you I wanted something to do. I think I have got what I wanted, but I should like to tell you about it, Rosalind.'

'Yes?' she said, looking up again with a smiling interrogation. She thought it was about some piece of exercise or amusement, some long walk he was going to take, some expedition which he wanted to organise.

'I have heard something very strange,' he said. 'It appears that I said something the other night to Rivers whom I found when I went back to the hotel, and that somebody, some lady, was seen to come near and listen. I was not saying any harm, you may suppose, but only that the children were upset. And this lady came round to hear what I was saying.'

His meaning did not easily reach Rosalind, who was preoccupied, and did not connect Roland at all with the mystery around

her. She said, 'That was strange; who could it be? some one who knew us in the hotel?'

'Rosalind, I have never liked to say anything to you about—Madam.'

'Don't!' she said, holding up her hand; 'oh, don't, Roland. The only time you spoke to me about her you hurt me—oh, to the very heart; not that I believed it: but it was so grievous that you could think, that you could say—that you could *see* even, anything——'

'I have thought it over a hundred times since then, and what you say is true, Rosalind. One has no right even to see things that—there are some people who are above even—I know now what you mean, and that it is true. You knew her better than any one else, and your faith is mine. That is why I came to tell you. Rosalind—who could that woman be but one? She came behind the bushes to hear what I was saying. She was all trembling—who else could that be?'

'Roland!' Rosalind had risen up, every tinge of colour ebbing from her face; 'you too!—you too——!'

'No,' he said, rising also, taking her hand; 'not that, not that, Rosalind. If she were dead, as you think, would she not know everything? She would not need to listen to me. This is what I am sure of, that she is here and trying every way——'

She grasped his hands as if her own were iron, and then let them go, and threw herself into her seat, and sobbed, unable to speak, 'Oh, Roland! oh, Roland!' with a cry that went to his heart.

'Rosalind,' he said, leaning over her, touching her shoulder, and her hair, with a sympathy which filled his eyes with tears, and would not be contented with words, 'listen; I am going to look for her now. I shan't tire of it whoever tires. I shall find her, Rosalind. And then, if she will let me take care of her, stand by her, bring her news of you all——! I have wronged her more than anybody, for I thought that I believed; see if I don't make up for it now. I could not go without telling you—I shall find her, Rosalind,' the young man cried.

She rose up again, trembling, and uncovered her face. Her cheeks were wet with tears, her eyes almost wild with hope and excitement. 'I'll come with you,' she said. 'I had made up my mind before. I will bear it no longer. Let them take everything; what does it matter? I am not only my father's daughter, I am myself first of all. If she is living, Roland——'

'She is living, I am sure.'

'Then as soon as we find her—oh no, she would go away from me: when you find her, Roland—— I put all my trust in you.'

'And then,' he cried breathlessly, 'and then? No, I'll make no bargains; only say you trust me, dear. You did say you trusted me, Rosalind.'

‘With all my heart,’ she said.

And as Rosalind looked at him, smiling with her eyes full of tears, the young man turned and hurried away. When he was nearly out of sight he looked back and waved his hand: she was standing up gazing after him as if—as if it was the man whom she loved who was leaving her. That was the thought that leaped up into his heart with an emotion indescribable—the feeling of one who has found what he had thought lost and beyond his reach. As if it was the man she loved! Could one say more than that? ‘But I’ll make no bargains, I’ll make no bargains,’ he said to himself. ‘It’s best to be all for love and nothing for reward.’

While this scene was being enacted in the garden, another of a very different description, yet bearing on the same subject, was taking place in the room which John Trevanion, with the instinct of an Englishman, called his study. The expedient of sending for Russell had not been very successful so far as the nursery was concerned. The woman had arrived in high elation and triumph, feeling that her ‘family’ had found it impossible to go on any longer without her, and full of the best intentions, this preliminary being fully acknowledged. She had meant to make short work with Johnny’s visions and the dreams of Amy, and to show triumphantly that she, and she only, understood the children. But when she arrived at Bonport, her reception was not what she had hoped. The face of affairs was changed. Johnny, who saw no more apparitions, no longer wanted any special care, and Russell found the other woman in possession, and indisposed to accept her dictation, or yield the place to her, while Amy, now transferred to Rosalind’s room and care, shrank from her almost with horror. All this had been bitter to her, a disappointment all the greater that her hopes had been so high. She found herself a supernumerary, not wanted by any one in the house, where she had expected to be regarded as a deliverer. The only consolation she received was from Sophy, who had greatly dropped out of observation during recent events, and was as much astonished and as indignant to find Amy the first object in the household, and herself left out, as Russell was in her humiliation. The two injured ones found great solace in each other in these circumstances. Sophy threw herself with enthusiasm into the work of consoling, yet embittering, her old attendant’s life. Sophy told her all that had been said in the house before her arrival, and described the distaste of everybody for her with much graphic force. She gave Russell also an account of all that had passed, of the discovery which she believed she herself had made, and further though this of itself sent the blood coursing through Russell’s veins, of the other incidents of the family life, and of Rosalind’s lovers; Mr. Rivers who had just come from the war, and Mr. Everard who was the gentleman who had been at the Red Lion. ‘Do you think he was in love with Rosalind then, Russell?’

Sophy said, her keen eyes dancing with curiosity and eagerness. Russell said many things that were very injudicious, every word of which Sophy laid up in her heart, and felt with fierce satisfaction that her coming was not to be for nothing, and that the hand of Providence had brought her to clear up this imbroglio. She saw young Everard next day, and convinced herself of his identity, and indignation and horror blazed up within her. Russell scarcely slept all night, and as she lay awake gathered together all the subjects of wrath she had, and piled them high. Next morning she knocked at John Trevanion's door, with a determination to make both her grievances and her discovery known at once.

'Mr. Trevanion,' said Russell, 'may I speak a word with you sir, if you please?'

John Trevanion turned round upon his chair, and looked at her with surprise, and an uncomfortable sense of something painful to come. What had he to do with the women-servants? That at least was out of his department. 'What do you want?' he asked in a helpless tone.

'Mr. John,' said Russell, drawing nearer, 'there is something that I must say. I can't say it to Mrs. Lennox, for she's turned against me like the rest. But a gentleman is more impartial like. Do you know, sir, who it is that is coming here every day, and after Miss Rosalind, as they tell me? After Miss Rosalind! It's not a thing I like to say of a young lady, and one that I've brought up, which makes it a deal worse; but she has no proper pride. Mr. John, do you know who that Mr. Everard, as they call him, is?'

'Yes, I know who he is. You had better attend to the affairs of the nursery, Russell.'

This touched into a higher blaze the fire of Russell's wrath. 'The nursery! I'm not allowed in it. There is another woman there that thinks she has the right to my place. I'm put in a room to do needlework, Mr. John. Me! and Miss Amy in Miss Rosalind's room, that doesn't know no more than you do how to manage her. But I mustn't give way,' the woman cried, with an effort. 'Do you know as the police are after him, Mr. John? Do you know it was all along of him as Madam went away?'

John Trevanion sprang from his chair. 'Be silent, woman!' he cried; 'how dare you speak so to me?'

'I've said it before, and I will again!' cried Russell—'a man not half her age. Oh, it was a shame!—and out of a house like Highcourt—and a lady that should know better, not a poor servant like them that are sent out of the way at a moment's notice when they go wrong. Don't lift your hand to me, Mr. John. Would you strike a woman, sir, and call yourself a gentleman? And you that brought me here against my will when I was happy at home. I won't go out of the room till I have said my say.'

'No,' said John, with a laugh which was half rage, though the idea that he was likely to strike Russell was a ludicrous exasperation. 'No, as you are a woman I can't, unfortunately, knock you down, whatever impertinence you may say.'

'I am glad of that, sir,' said Russell, 'for you looked very like it; and I've served the Trevanions for years, though I don't get much credit for it, and I shouldn't like to have to say as the lady of the house forgot herself for a boy, and a gentleman of the house struck a woman. I've too much regard for them to do that.'

Here she paused to take breath, and then resumed, standing in an attitude of defence against the door, whither John's threatening aspect had driven her: 'You mark my words, sir,' cried Russell, 'where that young man is Madam's not far off. Miss Sophy, that has her wits about her, she has seen her—and the others that is full of fancies they've seen what they think is a ghost: and little Miss Amy, she is wrong in the head with it. This is how I find things when I'm telegraphed for, and brought out to a strange place, and then told as I'm not wanted. But it's Providence as wants me here. Mrs. Lennox—she always was soft—I don't wonder at her being deceived: and besides she wasn't on the spot, and she don't know. But, Mr. Trevanion, you were there all the time. You know what goings on there were. It wasn't the doctor or the parson Madam went out to meet, and who was there besides? Nobody but this young man. When a woman's bent on going wrong she'll find out the way. You're going to strike me again! but it's true. It was him she met every night, every night, out in the cold. And then he saw Miss Rosalind, and he thought to himself—here's a young one, and a rich one, and far nicer than that old—— Mr. John! I know more than any of you know, and I'll put up with no violence, Mr. John!'

John Trevanion's words will scarcely bear repeating. He put her out of the room with more energy than perhaps he ought to have employed with a woman; and he bade her go to the devil with her infernal lies. Profane speech is not to be excused, but there are times when it becomes mere historical truth and not profanity at all. They were infernal lies, the language and suggestion of hell even if—even if—oh, that a bleeding heart should have to remember this!—even if they were true. John shut the door of his room upon the struggling woman and came back to face himself, who was more terrible still. Even if they were true! They brought back in a moment a suggestion which had died away in his mind, but which never had been definitely cast forth. His impulse when he had seen this young Everard had been to take him by the collar and pitch him forth, and refuse him permission even to breathe the same air: 'Dangerous fellow, hence; breathe not where princes are!' but then a sense of confusion and uncertainty had come in and baffled him. There was no proof, either, that Everard was the man, or that there was any

man. It was not Madam's handwriting, but her husband's, that had connected the youth with Highcourt; and though he might have a thousand faults, he did not look the cold-blooded villain who would make his connection with one woman a standing ground upon which to establish schemes against another. John Trevanion's brow grew quite crimson as the thought went through his mind. He was alone, and he was middle-aged and experienced in the world; and two years ago many a troublous doubt, and something even like a horrible certainty, had passed through his mind. But there are people with whom it is impossible to associate shame. Even if shame should be all but proved against them, it will not hold. When he thought an evil thought of Madam—nay, when that thought had but a thoroughfare through his mind against his will, the man felt his cheek redden and his soul faint. And here, too, were the storm-clouds of that catastrophe which was past, rolling up again, full of flame and wrath. They had all been silent then, awestricken, anxious to hush up and pass over, and let the mystery remain. But now this was no longer possible. A bewildering sense of confusion, of a darkness through which he could not make his way, of strange coincidences, strange contradictions, was in John Trevanion's mind. He was afraid to enter upon this maze, not knowing to what conclusion it might lead him. And yet now it must be done.

Only a very short time after another knock came to his door, and Rosalind entered, with an atmosphere about her of urgency and excitement. She said, without any preface:

'Uncle John, I have come to tell you what I have made up my mind to do. Do you remember that in two days I shall be of age, and my own mistress? In two days!'

'My dear,' he said, 'I hope you have not been under so hard a taskmaster as to make you impatient to be free.'

'Yes,' said Rosalind. 'Oh, not a hard taskmaster: but life has been hard, Uncle John! As soon as I am my own mistress, I am going, Amy and I, to—you know. I cannot rest here any longer. Amy will be safe; she can have my money. But this cannot go on any longer. If we should starve, we must find my mother. I know you will say she is not my mother. And who else, then? She is all the mother I have ever known. And I have left her these two years under a stain which she ought not to bear, and in misery which she ought not to bear. Was it ever heard of before that a mother should be banished from her children? I was too young to understand it all at first; and I had no habit of acting for myself; and perhaps you would have been right to stop me; but now——'

'Certainly I should have stopped you. But, Rosalind, I have come myself to a similar resolution,' he said. 'It must all be cleared up. But not by you, my dear, not by you. If there is anything to discover that is to her shame——'

‘There is nothing, Uncle John.’

‘My dear, you don’t know how mysterious human nature is.’ There are fine and noble creatures such as she is—as she is! don’t think I deny it, Rosalind—who may have yet a spot, a stain, which a man like me may see and grieve for and forgive, but you——

‘Oh, Uncle John, say that a woman like me may wash away with tears, if you like, but that should never, never be betrayed to the eyes of a man!’

He took her into his arms, weeping as she was, and he not far from it. ‘Rosalind, perhaps yours is the truest way: but yet as common people think, and according to the way of the world——’

‘Which is neither your way nor mine,’ cried the girl. ‘And you can say nothing to change my mind; I was too young at the time. But now—if she has died,’ Rosalind said, with difficulty swallowing down the ‘climbing sorrow’ in her throat, ‘she will know at least what we meant. And if she is living there is no rest but with our mother for Amy and me. And the child shall not suffer, Uncle John, for she shall have what is mine.’

‘Rosalind, you are still in the absolute stage—you see nothing that can modify your purposes. My dear, you should have had your mother to speak to on this subject. There are two men here, Rosalind, to whom . . . have you not some duty, some obligation? They both seem to me to be waiting—for what, Rosalind?’

Rosalind detached herself from her uncle’s arm. A crimson flush covered her face. ‘Is it—dishonourable?’ she said.

In the midst of his emotion John Trevanion could not suppress a smile. ‘That is, perhaps, a strong word.’

‘It would be dishonourable in a man,’ she cried, lifting her eyes with a hot colour under them which seemed to scorch her.

‘It would be impossible in a man, Rosalind,’ he said gravely; ‘the circumstances are altogether different. And yet you too owe something to Roland, who has loved you all his life, poor fellow, and to Rivers, who has come here neglecting everything for your sake. I do not know,’ he added, in a harsher tone, ‘whether there may not be still another claim.’

‘I think you are unjust, Uncle John,’ she said, with tremulous dignity. ‘And if it is as you say, these gentlemen have followed their own inclinations, not mine. Am I bound because they have seen fit—— But that would be slavery for a woman.’ Then her countenance cleared a little, and she added, ‘When you know all that is in my mind, you will not disapprove.’

‘I hope you will make a wise decision, Rosalind,’ he said. ‘But at least do nothing—make up your mind to nothing—till the time comes.’ He spoke vaguely, and so did she, but in the excitement of their minds neither remarked this in the other. For he had not hinted to her, nor she to him, the possibility of some great new event which might happen at any moment and change all plans and thoughts.

CHAPTER LVII.

ROSALIND left her uncle with the thrill of her resolution in all her veins. She met, as she crossed the ante-room, Rivers, who had just come in and was standing waiting for a reply to the petition to be admitted to see her which he had just sent by a servant. She came upon him suddenly while he stood there, himself wound up to high tension, full of passion and urgency, feeling himself ill-used, and determined that now at last this question should be settled. He had failed indeed in pushing his suit by means of the mysterious stranger whom he had not seen again; but this made him only return with additional vehemence to his own claim, the claim of a man who had waited a year for his answer. But when he saw Rosalind there came over him that instant softening which is so apt to follow an unusual warmth of angry feeling, when we are 'wroth with those we love.' He thought at first that she had come to him in answer to his message, granting all he asked by that gracious personal response. 'Rosalind!' he cried, putting out his hands. But next moment his countenance reflected the blush in hers, as she turned to him startled, not comprehending and shrinking from this enthusiastic address. 'I beg your pardon,' he said, crushing his hat in his hands. 'I was taken by surprise. Miss Trevanion, I had just sent to ask——'

Rosalind was seized by a sort of helpless terror. She was afraid of him and his passion. She said, 'Uncle John is in his room. Oh, forgive me, please! If it is me, will you wait—oh, will you be so kind as to wait till Thursday? Everything will be settled then. I shall know then what I have to do. Mr. Rivers, I am very sorry to give you so much trouble——'

'Trouble!' he cried; his voice was almost inarticulate in the excess of emotion. 'How can you use such words to me? As if trouble had anything to do with it; if you would send me to the end of the earth, so long as it was to serve you, or give me one of the labours of Hercules——Yes, I know I am extravagant. One becomes extravagant in the state of mind in which—— And to hear you speak of trouble——'

'Mr. Rivers,' said Rosalind, humble in her sense of guilt, 'I have a great many things to think of. You don't know how serious it is; but on Thursday I shall be of age, and then I can decide. Come then, if you will, and I will tell you. Oh, let me tell you on Thursday—not now!'

'That does not sound very hopeful for me,' he said. 'Miss Trevanion, remember that I have waited a year for my answer—few men do that without——without——'

And then he paused, and looked at her with an air which was at once fierce and piteous, defiant and imploring. And Rosalind shrank with a sense of guilt, feeling that she had no

right to hold him in suspense, yet frightened by his vehemence, and too much agitated to know what to say.

'On Thursday,' she said, mechanically; 'on Thursday—— You shall not complain of me any more.' She held out her hand to him with a smile, apologetic and deprecatory, which was very sweet, which threw him into a bewilderment unspeakable. She was cruel without knowing it, without intending it. She had, she thought, something to make up to this man, and how could she do it but by kindness—by showing him that she was grateful—that she liked and honoured him? He went away asking himself a thousand questions, going over and over her simple words, extracting meanings from them of which they were entirely innocent, framing them at last to the signification which he wished. He started from Bonport full of doubt and uneasiness, but before he reached his hotel a foolish elation had got the better of these sadder sentiments. He said to himself that these words could have but one meaning. 'You shall not complain of me any more.' But if she cast him off after this long probation he would have very good reason to complain. It was impossible that she should prepare a refusal by such words; and indeed if she had meant to refuse him could she have postponed her answer again? Is it not honour in a woman to say 'No' without delay, unless she means to say 'Yes'? It is the only claim of honour upon her, who makes so many claims upon the honour of men, to say 'No,' if she means 'No.' No one could mistake that primary rule. When she said 'Thursday,' was it not the last assurance she could give before a final acceptance, and—'You shall not complain of me any more'? This is a consequence of the competitive system in love which Mr. Ruskin evidently did not foresee, for Rosalind, on the other hand, was right enough when she tried to assure herself that she had not wished for his love, had not sought it in any way that she should be made responsible for its discomfiture. Rivers employed his time of suspense in making arrangements for his departure. He was a proud man, and he would not have it said that he had left Aix hastily in consequence of his disappointment. In the evening he wrote some letters, vaguely announcing a speedy return. 'Perhaps almost as soon as you receive this,' he said, always guarding against the possibility of a sudden departure; and then he said to himself that such a thing was impossible. This was how he spent the intervening days. He had almost forgotten by this time, in the intensity of personal feeling, the disappointment and shock to his pride involved in the fact that the lady of the garden had appeared no more.

In the meantime, while all this was going on, Reginald was out on the shining water in a boat, which was the first thing the English boy turned to in that urgent necessity for 'something to do' which is the first thought of his mind. He

had taken Sophy with him condescendingly for want of a better, reflecting contemptuously all the time on the desertion of that beggar Hamerton, with whom he was no longer the first object. But Sophy was by no means without advantages as a companion. He sculled her out half a mile from shore with the intention of teaching her how to row on the way back, but Sophy had made herself more amusing in another way by that time, and he was willing to do the work while she maintained the conversation. Sophy was nearly as good as Scheherazade. She kept up her narrative, or series of narratives, with scarcely a pause to take breath, for she was very young and very long-winded, with her lungs in perfect condition, and her stories had this advantage, to the primitive intelligence that is, that they were all true—which is to say that they were all about real persons, and spiced by that natural inclination to take the worst view of everything, which unfortunately is so often justified by the results, and makes a storyteller piquant, popular, and detested. Sophy had a great future before her in this way, and in the meantime she made Reginald acquainted with everything, as they both concluded, that he ought to know. She told him about Everard, and the saving of Amy and Johnny, which he concluded to be a 'plant' and 'just like the fellow'; and about the encouragement Rosalind gave him, at which Rex swore, to the horror yet delight of his little sister, great *real* oaths. And then the story quickened and the interest rose as she told him about the apparitions, about what the children saw, and finally, under a vow of secrecy (which she had also administered to Russell), what she herself saw, and the conclusion she had formed. When she came to this point of her story, Reginald was too much excited even to swear. He kept silence with a dark countenance, and listened, leaning forward on his oars with a rapt attention that flattered Sophy. 'I told Uncle John,' cried the child, 'and he asked me what was I going to do? How could I do anything, Rex? I watched because I don't believe in ghosts, and I knew it could not be a ghost. But what could I do at my age? And besides, I did not actually see her so as to speak to her. I only touched her as she passed.'

'And you are sure it was——' The boy was older than Sophy, and understood better. He could not speak so glibly of everything as she did.

'Mamma? Yes, of course I am sure. I don't take fits like the rest; I always know what I see. Don't you think Uncle John was the one to do something about it, Rex? And he has not done anything. It could never be thought that it was a thing for me.'

'I'll tell you what, Sophy,' said Rex, almost losing his oars in his vehemence; 'soon it'll have to be a thing for me. I can't let things go on like this with all Aunt Sophy's muddlings and Uncle John's. The children will be driven out of their senses;

and Rosalind is just a romantic—— I am the head of the family, and I shall have to interfere.'

'But you are only seventeen,' said Sophy, her eyes starting from their sockets with excitement and delight.

'But I am the head of the house. John Trevanion may give himself as many airs as he likes, but he is only a younger son. After all, it is I that have got to decide what's right for my family. I have been thinking a great deal about it,' he cried. If—if—Mrs. Trevanion is to come like this frightening people out of their wits——'

'Oh, Reginald,' cried Sophy, with a mixture of admiration and horror, 'how can you call mamma Mrs. Trevanion?'

'That's her name,' said the boy. His lips quivered a little, to do him justice, and his face was darkly red with passion, which was scarcely his fault, so unnatural were all the circumstances. 'I am going to insist that she should live somewhere, so that a fellow may say where she lives. It's awful when people ask you where's your mother, not to be able to say. I suppose she has enough to live on. I shall propose to let her choose where she pleases, but to make her stay in one place, so that she can be found when she is wanted. Amy could be sent to her for a bit, and then the fuss would be over——'

'But, Rex, you said we should lose all our money——'

'Oh, bother!' cried the boy. 'Who's to say anything? Should I make a trial and expose everything to take her money from Amy? (It isn't so very much you have, any of you, that I should mind.) I suppose even, if I insisted, they might take a villa for her here or somewhere. And then one could say she lived abroad for her health. That is what people do every day. I know lots of fellows whose father, or their mother, or some one, lives abroad for their health. It would be more respectable. It would be a thing you could talk about when it was necessary,' Rex said.

Sophy's mind was scarcely yet open to this view of the question. 'I wish you had told me,' she said, peevishly, 'that one could get out of it like that: for I should have liked to speak to mamma——'

'I don't know that we *can* get out of it like that. The law is very funny; it may be impossible, perhaps. But at all events,' said Reginald, recovering his oars, and giving one great impulse forward with all his strength which made the boat shoot along the lake like a living thing, 'I know that I won't let it be muddled any longer if I can help it, and that I am going to interfere.'

CHAPTER LVIII.

ROLAND HAMERTON did not find any trace of her. He had pledged himself easily, in utter ignorance of all ways and means, to find her, knowing nothing, neither how to set about such a search, or where

he was likely to meet with success in it. It is easy for a young man in his fervour to declare that he is able to do anything for the girl he loves, and to feel that in that inspiration he is sure to carry all before him. But love will not trace the lost even when it is the agony of love for the lost, and that passion of awful longing, anxiety, and fear which is perhaps the most profound of all human emotions. The fact that he loved Rosalind did not convert him into that sublimated and heroic version of a detective officer which is to be found more often in fiction than reality. He, too, went to all the hotels, as John Trevanion had done; he walked about incessantly, looking at everybody he met, and trying hard in his bad French to push cunning inquiries everywhere—inquiries which he thought cunning, but which were in reality only very innocently anxious, betraying his object in the plainest way. ‘A tall lady, English, with remains of great beauty.’ ‘Oui, monsieur, nous la connaissons;’ a dozen such lively responses were made to him, and he was sent in consequence to wander about as many villas, to prowl in the gardens of various hotels, rewarded by the sight of some fine Englishwomen and some scarecrows, but never with the most distant glimpse of the woman he sought. He did, however, meet and recognise almost at every turn the young fellow whose appearances at Bonport had been few since Rosalind’s repulse, but whom he had seen several times in attendance upon Mrs. Lennox, and of whom he knew that he was understood to have been seen in the village at Highcourt, presumably on account of Rosalind, and was therefore a suitor too, and a rival. Something indefinable in his air, though Roland did not know him sufficiently to be a just judge, had increased at first the natural sensation of angry scorn with which a young lover looks upon another man who has presumed to lift his eyes to the same *objet adoré*; but presently there arose in his mind something of that same sensation of fellowship which had drawn him on the first night of his arrival towards Rivers. They were in ‘the same box.’ No doubt she was too good for any of them, and Everard had not the sign and seal of the English gentleman about him—the one thing indispensable; but yet there was a certain brotherhood even in the rivalry. Roland addressed him at last when he met him coming round one of the corners, where he himself was posted gazing blankly at an English lady pointed out to him by an officious boatman from the lake. His gaze over a wall, his furtive aspect when discovered, all required, he felt, explanation. ‘I think we almost know each other,’ he said, in a not unfriendly tone. Everard took off his hat with the instinct of a man who has acquired such breeding as he has in foreign countries, an action for which, as was natural, the Englishman mildly despised him. ‘I have seen you, at least, often,’ he replied. And then Roland plunged into his subject.

‘Look here! You know the Trevanions, don’t you? Oh

yes, I heard all about it—the children and all that. I am a very old friend,’ Roland dwelt upon these words by way of showing that a stranger was altogether out of competition with him in this respect at least. ‘There is a lady in whom they are all—very much interested, to say the least, living somewhere about here: but I don’t know where, and nobody seems to know. You seem to be very well up to all the ways of the place; perhaps you could help me. Ros—— I mean,’ said Roland, with a cough to obliterate the syllable—‘they would all be very grateful to any one who would find——’

‘What,’ said Everard slowly, looking in Roland’s face, ‘is the lady’s name?’

It was the most natural question; and yet the one man put it with a depth of significance which to a keener observer than Roland would have proved his previous knowledge; while the other stood entirely disconcerted, and not knowing how to reply. It was perfectly natural; but somehow he had not thought of it as a probable question. And he was not prepared with an answer.

‘Oh—ah—her name. Well, she is a kind of a relation, you know—and her name would be—Trevanion.’

‘Oh, her name would be Trevanion? Is there supposed to be any chance that she would change her name?’

‘Why do you ask such a question?’

‘I thought, by the way you spoke, as if there might be a doubt.’

‘No,’ said Roland after a moment, ‘I never thought—I don’t think it’s likely. Why should she change her name?’

Everard answered with great softness, ‘I don’t know anything about it. Something in your tone suggested the idea, but no doubt I am wrong. No, I cannot say, all in a moment, that I am acquainted——’ Here his want of experience told like Roland’s. He was very willing, nay anxious, to deceive, but did not know how. He coloured and made a momentary pause. ‘But I will inquire,’ he said, ‘if it is a thing that the—Trevanions want to find out.’

Roland looked at him with instinctive suspicion, but he did not know what he suspected. He had no desire, however, to put this quest out of his own hands into those of a man who might make capital of it as he himself intended to do. He said hastily, ‘Oh, I don’t want to put you to trouble. I think I am on the scent. If you hear anything, however, and would come in and see me at the hotel—to-night.’

The other looked at him with something in his face which Roland did not understand. Was it a kind of sardonic smile? Was it offence? He ended by repeating, ‘I will inquire,’ and took off his hat again in that Frenchified way.

And Roland went on, unaided, somewhat discouraged indeed,

with his inquiries. Sometimes he saw in the distance a figure in the crowd which he thought he recognised, and hurried after it, but never with any success. For either it was gone when he reached the spot, or turned out to be one of the ordinary people about; for of course there were many tall ladies wearing black to be seen about the streets of Aix, and most of them English. He trudged about all that day and the next with a heavy heart, his high hopes abandoning him and the search seeming hopeless. He became aware when night fell that he was not alone in his quest. There drifted past him at intervals, hurried, flushed, and breathless, with her cloak hanging from her shoulders, her bonnet blown back from her head, her eyes always far in front of her, investigating every corner, a woman, so instinct with keen suspicion and what looked like a thirst for blood, that she attracted the looks even of the careless passers-by, and was followed, till she outstripped him, by more than one languid gendarme. Her purpose was so much more individual than she was, that for a time in the features of this human sleuth-hound he failed to recognise Russell. But it was Russell, as he soon saw, with a mixture of alarm and horror. It seemed to him that some tragic force of harm was in this woman's hand, and that while he wandered vaguely round and round discovering nothing, she, grim with hatred and revenge, was on the track.

(To be concluded.)

'The Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions:—Mrs. F. Ross 5*l.*; J. D. 2*s.* 6*d.*; C. S. P. (Glasgow) 10*s.*; Mrs. Getting 10*s.*; E. M. B. 6*s.*; N. B. L. 5*l.*; Miss E. G. Eyre 7*s.* 6*d.*; from a Reader 1*s.* for a child at Rotherhithe who is paralysed; Miss W. and three friends 4*s.*; Dr. Fyffe for 'Donna' 1*l.*; Dr. Fyffe for 'Don' 1*l.*; J. H. W. 10*s.*; M. A. 2*s.*; Farthings 5*s.*; E. C. V. 2*l.*; F. J. 1*l.*; L. L. 5*s.*; Anonymous 1*l.* 1*s.*; J. E. Lee 2*l.*; Mrs. Reader 10*s.*

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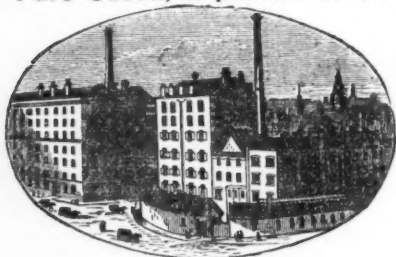
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